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HARNESS THE WIND to power your gadgets p52

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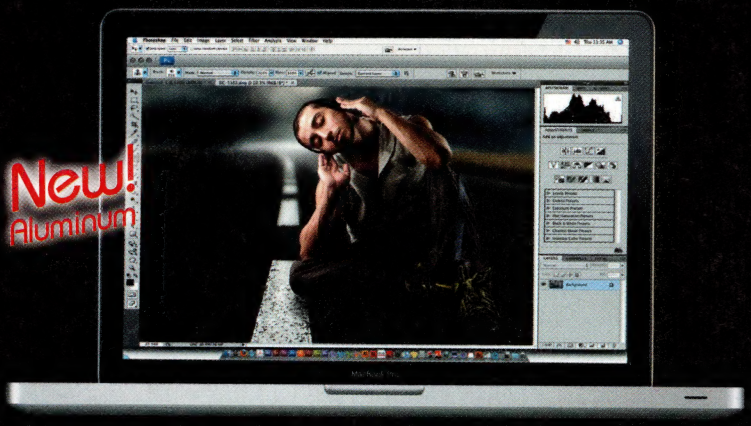

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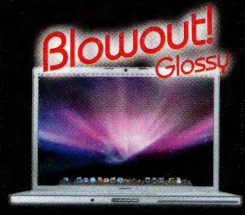

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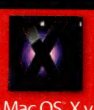

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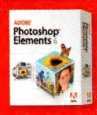

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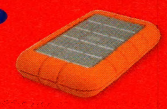

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MARCH 2009 VOL.3 NO.3

FEATURES

COVER STORY

20 Mac Expo—What's It All Mean?

Another Mac Expo come and gone. Were you giddy? Underwhelmed? Relive all the highs and lows of the event, and find out which announcements our staff was hoping to have heard.

By *Mac|Life* Staff

42 Make MobileMe Yours

Seven ways to customize Apple's now-functioning data-sync service.

By *Mac|Life* Staff

30 10 Reasons Your Small Business Should Run on Macs

Macintosh, long the computer of choice for designers, is being adopted by more and more businesses. Learn how a Mac can save your company time and money—and send the message of savvy judgement to your customers.

By Jason Whong

48 Odd Jobs

Photographer Matthew Carden uses his Macs machines and photo-editing apps to create surprising art with food and Lilliputian figurines.

By Leslie Ayers

DEPARTMENTS

6 ONLINE AT MACLIFE.COM
Get the dish on all the latest Mac rumors and news in articles, how-tos, and videos and podcasts on MacLife.com.

8 CONSIDER
Dear Phil, Where's the thrill?

10 SHARE
Thanks for sharing.

14 START
Enjoy the iPhone's most notable appearances in the pop-culture sphere.

96 WIN
Check out the winning caption from our *Mac|Life*-centric version of the *New Yorker*'s caption contest, and share your worst data catastrophes to win a ten-outlet surge protector and UPS.

CREATE

86 Ask Want to transfer videos back and forth from TiVo to your Mac? Need to block your addictive access to Facebook while you are supposed to be working? You ask, we show you the way. (Email questions to ask@maclife.com.)

88 Access Your To-Do List from Anywhere Would it help to be able to sync your to-do list between your Mac and your iPhone—or even your PC? We show you how to use your Mac to stay on task. **By Joe Rybicki**

REVIEWS 52

52 **HYmini** alternative-energy charger
54 **Air-Through** lap-cooling stand
56 **Optimus Maximus** OLED keyboard
57 **Selphy CP760** photo printer
58 **iPhone juicepacks** roundup
59 **Soma** laptop bag
60 **Mail Act-On 2** Mail plug-in
62 **StoryMill 3.2.1** novel-writing app
63 **NoteBook 3** information organizer
64 **Adobe Photoshop CS4** image editor
66 **Flip MinoHD** HD video camera

LISTEN 70

70 **iDJ2** DJ workstation
72 **Simplify Media** music-streaming app
73 **GrooveNeo** iPod alarm clock
75 **TuneBuds Mobile** earbuds
77 **iPod Accessories** roundup
78 **SR60** headphones

PLAY 80

80 **ToCA Race Driver 3 and FlatOut 2** racing game review
82 **Spore Creepy & Cute Parts Pack** expansion pack review
84 **Kivi's Underworld** casual RPG review

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>>HOW-TOS

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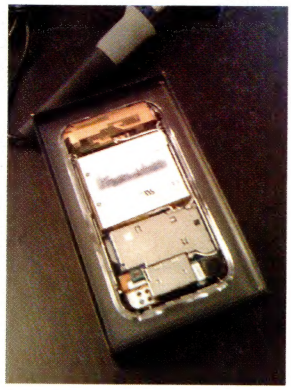

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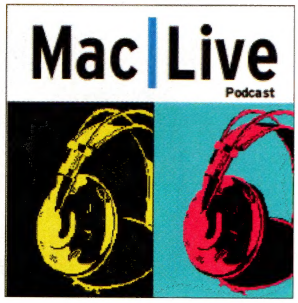

Once a week the *Mac|Life* staff dons their special podcast headgear and shares their take on the latest news that affects the realm of Apple with the wide world of the Internet. Tune in each week for hot tips, the latest news, and the raddest scatting this side of the Mississippi.

>>THE MAGAZINE

Starting Feb 1, visit MacLife.com to see what's featured in the March issue of *Mac|Life*, and to find online versions of many of the issue's features, reviews, and how-to articles.

>>NEWS

Every day MacLife.com scours the Internet for the news that's important to you. From the latest App Store releases to the all the happenings in Cupertino, we update the latest news throughout the day. Just be sure your boss doesn't catch you neglecting your duties.

COMING NEXT MONTH IN THE MAGAZINE...

YOU CALL YOURSELF A MAC GEEK?

You can after you read "50 Things Every Mac Geek Should Know," in the April 2009 issue of *Mac|Life*. Plus: Don't miss our widescreen display roundup and in-depth reviews of the apps in iWork '09.

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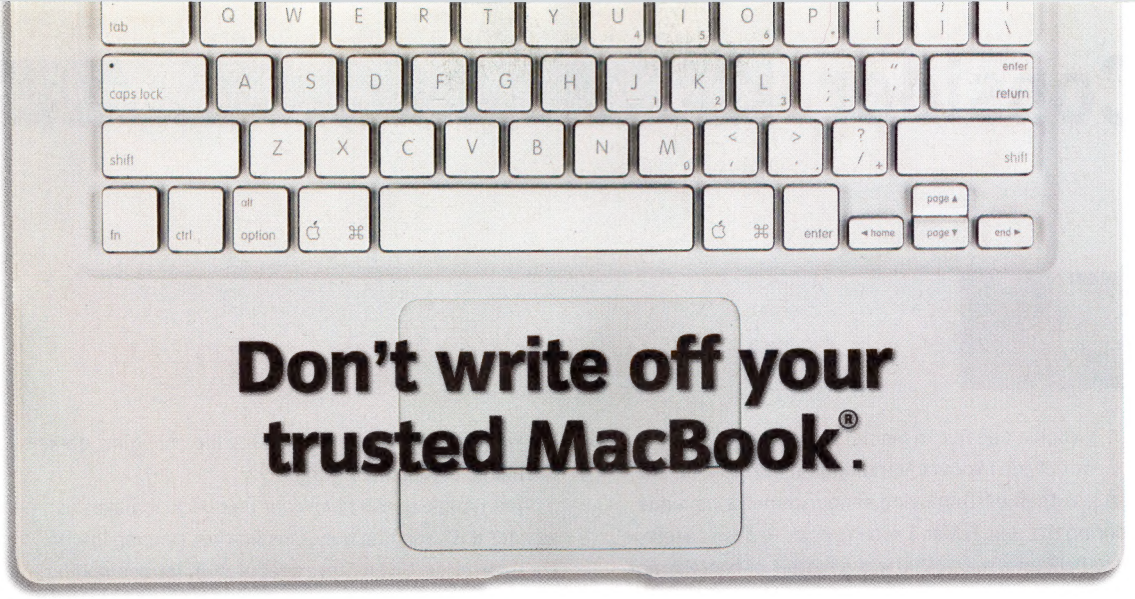

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DEAR PHIL, WHERE'S THE THRILL?

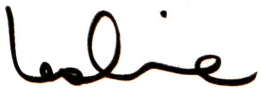
It wouldn't be fair to blame Apple Senior VP of Worldwide Product Marketing Phil Schiller for the less-than-earth-moving announcements he made during the Jan. 6 Mac Expo keynote. Phil isn't Steve, and he knows it, but this was a matter of content, not delivery. Phil did his best to work with the hardware and software material Apple gave him, as well as stand in for Apple's deified celebrity CEO. We really wished Phil had worn Steve's mock turtle and Levi's, but we can't fault his showmanship skills.

The problem is that in his January 2007 keynote launching the iPhone, Steve set expectations that Apple would offer up something spine-tingling at *all* its high-profile public addresses. Sure, we're dying to test out the Faces and Places features in the new iPhoto '09, and we were duly impressed with the care and thought Apple put into the updates in both iLife and iWork. But I'm sorry, Phil, ever since the iPhone and App Store were announced, new versions of consumer software just don't give me chills. I want new hardware—and I don't mean bigger Cinema Displays, which I couldn't even afford on my editor's salary.

I want gadgets and gear that are life-changing, game-changing, paradigm-shifting.

When Apple doesn't blow our hair back, it makes us wonder if it's running out of inspiration, running low on creative juices. Given Steve's reputation for demanding the impossible from his product-development teams, that explanation is hard to believe. Sure, everyone does suffer from creative block now and then, and maybe it's Apple's turn to "just sit this one out." All we can do is hope that the gadgetware drought passes quickly. We dig the Philster, and we won't even mind if he becomes the new announcement-maker du jour. But if the content of Apple's next announcement doesn't move in a decidedly more hardware-focused direction, we'll be forced to consider that maybe Apple has, in fact, lost its way.

I want gadgets that are life-changing, game-changing, paradigm-shifting.



Leslie Ayers, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

>>>OVERHEARD AT MAC|LIFE THIS MONTH...

I *am* being totally serious. Ask Woz if he'll give me a ride on his Segway.
—Ray, to a freelancer on her way to interview Steve Wozniak at Mac Expo.

You think you want free stuff, but then you have to lug it home. And find a place for it. And eventually get rid of it when you realize you never really wanted it to begin with.
—Susie, warning MacLife.com reporter Flo Ion against overdoing the swag at her first Mac Expo.

What?!?! Faces doesn't work on animals? What about all the pictures of my cats?
—Robbie learns the iPhoto '09's new feature, Faces, doesn't work on animal faces. Also, he's become a crazy Cat Man.

Snow Leopard. Every time I hear that I think of a Disney movie starring Dakota Fanning and Kurt Russell.
—Robin, as the editors discussed the likelihood that Apple would announce Snow Leopard at Mac Expo.

Steve and I are sitting this one out.
—Jan, to the team on how she would pass on this Expo and hold down the fort.

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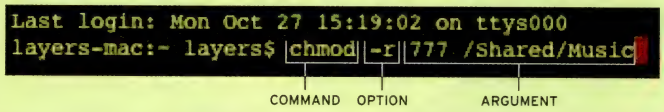
Terminal Trips

Back to Anatomy 101 for you. In "Terminal Tips that Every Mac User Should Know" (Jan/08, p34), item number 3 on page 35 is incorrectly labeled. "layers-mac:~ layers$" is the shell prompt. The command is "chmod" and the option is "-r". The first argument is "777". You got the second argument mostly right but you didn't include the leading "/". It looks like you intended this command to grant all permissions to everyone on any file or subdirectory in the "/Shared/Music" directory tree. In that case the correct option is "-r".—*John Paul Gregory Dalbec*

>John Paul, thanks for following your conscience! We did indeed mislabel the graphic, and the error was ours, not that of the writer, Johnathon Williams. We hope anyone who was brave enough to try some of our Terminal tips didn't get too tied in knots as a result, but in the hopes of unconfusing Terminal noobs everywhere, we present the corrected Anatomy of a Terminal Command graphic, below.—*Leslie Ayers*



The Pied Pipers of Tablet

I read with a great sense of vindication and kinship Roberto Baldwin's comments on p48 of the Dec 2008 issue. At last I'm not alone! I have found no other person using a drawing tablet in this way in all the time I've used a Mac or been around other Mac users. I am learning disabled and found that even though my Mac had freed me from my personal constraints (poor spelling and incomprehensible penmanship), there was still something lacking. I started using a Wacom tablet as my primary input device in 1994 when I got my first Mac, a Quadra 610. I brought it home and used it until I was forced to upgrade to a G4 in 2000. I made sure my order included another USB compatible tablet (so I wouldn't be forced back to using a mouse). A tablet allows me to free up my hands and not be worried about the cord getting hung up or the mouse running off the pad.—*Kenneth Toole*

>If it were up to me, we'd use our flutes to lure all the mice (mouses?) and then toss them in a huge pyre and dance around it with our fists pumping in the air. The mouse is quite possibly the worst piece of computer equipment you can own. It's actually more harmful than Windows Vista, if you can believe that. Hopefully Kenneth and I can educate the masses and start a mini-revolution. Viva la Tablet!—*Robbie*

Printing Prowess

I read the "Slow Down, So You Can Print" tip by Scott Rose on your website (posted 12/15/2008) about printing out emails without losing the body of your email, and I wanted to tell you that I have found a different workaround on my own. I double click the email and then click the print icon in the email window. It prints completely with no problem. I'm running 10.4. I am a caffeine junkie and this allows me to keep clicking without slowing down.—*Allyse Turner*

>We feel your need for speed, Allyse. Thanks for the tip.—*Mac|Life*

Photoshop al Dente

You can stop wondering why Adobe put a new adjustment brush and gradient filter into Camera Raw instead of into Photoshop CS4 (*Mac|Life*, Dec/08, p36). I'm not associated with Adobe, and I can't read Adobe's corporate mind, but the reason is a relatively simple technical fact that everyone who is serious about digital photography and Photoshop needs to know. Camera Raw works its magic on the essentially unprocessed data produced by a camera (see "Take Your Photos Raw," Sep/08, p34). Photoshop works with gamma encoded data that no longer is as flexible as its raw counterpart. To its credit, Adobe is beefing up Camera Raw because maximizing the data before it is gamma encoded and sent to Photoshop makes for better photographs. —*Albert A. Kashinski*

PHOTO OF THE MONTH

If there's one way to the *Mac|Life* staff's hearts, it's the sucrose superhighway. We love our sugar here. And when we got a generous box of cupcakes from g:m:me bakery, a lovely Irish bakery here in the Bay Area, we were stoked.

Submit your images for Photo of the Month to letters@maclife.com. Photos will be chosen based on creative use of the Apple or *Mac|Life* logo, creative modification of an Apple or Mac-related product, or some interesting and unique situation or use of an Apple or related item. If we run your photo, we'll send you a free *Mac|Life* T-shirt!

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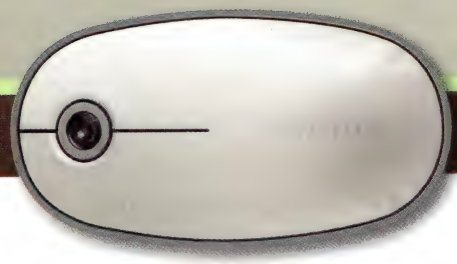

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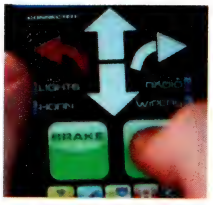
AWARD SEASON

AND THE iPHONE OSCAR GOES TO...

Er, maybe we should have called them the iPhone Emmys, since iPhone product placement mostly shows up on TV. But give us a break—we're trying to finagle an Academy Awards tie-in here, folks!

When was the last time a tech device captured the pop-culture imagination quite so completely? Hollywood is getting ready to hand out its own top film honors this month, so we thought we'd note the most prominent iPhone sightings in the pop-cult sphere. Here, our favorite iPhone film, TV, and Web-video cameos from the last year or so.—*Amy Keyishian*



Dr. Horrible's van-blasting iPhone app, at left, saves his day.

CATEGORY: BEST EVIL OVERLORD ASSISTANCE

Poor Dr. Horrible: He's all set to pull off the heist that'll get him the wonderflonium he needs for his freeze-ray when his beloved Penny shows up. OK, never mind the exact plot-points. In Joss Whedon's writers-strike Web musical, *Dr. Horrible's Sing-Along Blog*—starring Neil Patrick Harris (Dr. Horrible), Felicia Day (Penny), and Nathan Fillion (Capt. Hammer)—it's an iPhone with a remote-control app that heists the courier van and kicks off the chain of events that ends with—sorry, no spoilers!

Chuck gets a picture via MMS from Morgan. We wish it weren't fiction!

CATEGORY: BEST USE OF A MOST DESIRED—BUT NONEXISTENT IN THE REAL WORLD—FEATURE

Here is what we learned from NBC's *Chuck* this year: Though the rest of us pine for the day that we can send and receive picture messages via multimedia messaging (MMS) on our iPhones, secret agents can do it any ol' time—even when they're just posing as mild-mannered Buy More employees.

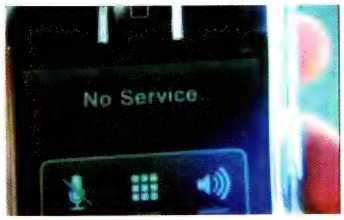
Amber, Angie, Amy, Anna, Adrian, Ashley, Aubrey, Britney Miami Call Her, Britney Canada Whore....

CATEGORY: SMOKINGEST GUN

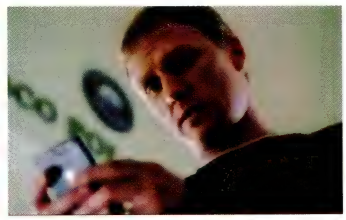
OMG, srsly, this one time? On the MTV show *The Hills*? Lauren Conrad was talking to Brody? And she totally called him out for having a billion girls' numbers on his iPhone. And there's no way they were all his "friends" because there were like sooo many of them. And also a guy would probably not refer to his friend as "Britney Canada Whore." And also, his excuse was that the numbers were all old because he'd used some program to transfer all his info from an old phone to the iPhone? As if! *Busted!* **See:** gawker.com/news/the-hills/come-on-who-doesnt-have-britney-canada-whore-in-his-iphone-329675.php

CATEGORY: BEST UPSIDE-DOWN CAMEO

The ill-fated TV drama *Journeyman* premiered on September 24, 2007, a week before the first-gen iPhone hit the market, so who can blame the props department for getting a few things inverted? When the main character, Dan, leaps through time, the first thing he does is check his iPhone to learn the date—or see if cell signals exist at all. The phone functions as a latter-day Great Gazoo, a pint-sized anachronism Dan can use to prove his time-shifting abilities. But the real mystery is: How does he get it to work so well when he's holding it upside-down? **See:** www.youtube.com/watch?v=bt_LfYaASpc



The screen on Dan's iPhone is sort of accurate...except for the fact that the Home button is at the top.



Good news: Web searches work flawlessly during time travel. Bad news: Someone Dan knew (and loved?) is dead.

CATEGORY: BEST WORK-FROM-HOME TOOL

What we learned from *CSI*: When you get sick, you stay home—even if you're Gil Grissom. When Grissom is felled by the flu in season 8, episode 12 ("Grissom's Divine Comedy"), he sends Catherine Willows to a crime scene in his place, asking her to photograph the evidence with her iPhone so he can see what she's seeing. Luckily for the show's, uh, credibility, Willows doesn't feed her shots into any of the space-age analysis tools back at the lab, which would beg the question: How much forensics data can you get from a 2-megapixel image?

Willows snaps a pic of a murder victim's burned-out car so Grissom can "be" at the scene while he's at home coughing and sniffling.

CATEGORY: SNEAKIEST SANTA PLOY

Who's the baddest doctor of them all? In his eponymous series, NBC's House tricks everyone into thinking he is his or her secret Santa, then "borrows" an iPhone and pretends someone has given it to him, so his colleagues fly into a jealous frenzy...or something. This show is nearly impossible to follow if you're not on the same painkillers as House. The point is, the iPhone is a serious object of desire—even for medical pros who could easily afford to buy their own. **See:** www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xdq-3Q8P_rg

"Either that cost more than 25 bucks, or I'm seriously starting to doubt Steve Jobs' business strategies."

AND IN TWO FINAL CATEGORIES...

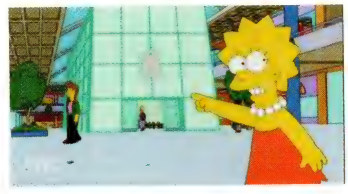
CATEGORY: BEST NON-iPHONE SEXY ACCOUTREMENT

And the award goes to Carrie and her PowerBook—which she finally replaced with a white MacBook in the movie version of *Sex and the City*. No woman has been so closely identified with the tool of her trade since Amelia Earhart and her Lockheed Electra (and you thought we were going to say Pandora and her box).

Carrie Bradshaw's MacBook completes her.

CATEGORY: FUNNIEST APPLE SKEWERING

Lisa and the Mapple Store on *The Simpsons*. Ouch. Just ouch. Still, we haven't indulged in this much knowing laughter since Daniel Lyons' Fake Steve Jobs blog. **See:** www.hulu.com/watch/46753/the-simpsons-mapple-store. And if you need more, try not to pee your pants watching Bart sabotage a Steve Mobs address at www.hulu.com/watch/46751/the-simpsons-steve-mobs.



"Mom, Dad, our mail got a Mapple Store!"

MACWORLD EXPO 2009

BEST IN SHOW

Our first—and likely last—official awards for our favorite products released and demonstrated at Mac Expo, all of which, we're sad to report, didn't come from Apple.

Many people—including us—left Apple's keynote at Macworld Expo on January 6 feeling underwhelmed. The iLife '09 demo was neat and all, but nothing life-altering. If you felt the same way, don't forget that more than 500 other exhibitors showed off their wares as well—everything from $7,000 interactive tables for elementary-school classrooms to thumb drives that look like Chewbacca. Here's what impressed us the most on the Expo floor, motivating us to present our first (and probably only) totally informal Best in Show accolades for Mac Expo 2009.—*Mac|Life Staff*

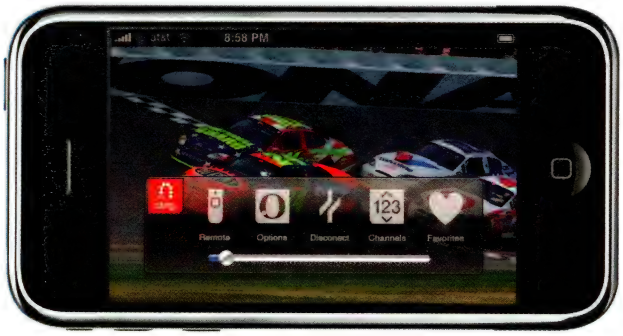
AKG High-Definition Headphones

Known for pro mics and headphones, AKG (www.akg.com) is entering the U.S. consumer market with a wide range of headphones, from $17 earbuds to fancier canalphones, DJ headphones, and four gorgeous HD models, which felt like angels perching on our heads when we tried them on. The ear cups surround your whole ears (the closed-back K172 HD, $169.99, and K272 HD, $379.99, are best for listening in public), the self-adusting headband rocks, and the rich sound makes them worth the price.

The K272 HD headphones are like buttah.

SlingPlayer Mobile for iPhone

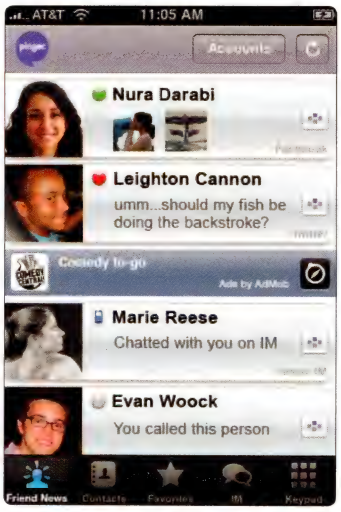
Perhaps our favorite thing hadn't even been released yet: SlingPlayer Mobile (www.slingmedia.com) for the iPhone, which lets Slingbox owners watch live TV streaming to their device over 3G or Wi-Fi. The smooth video made our jaws drop—live TV, or TiVo-ed shows, on our iPhones? Yes, please! Sling Media also showed the upcoming SlingPlayer for Mac HD, a Web app that shows HD video in your browser, if you've got a Slingbox PRO-HD. Both should be out in the first quarter.



Sling Media's much-anticipated SlingPlayer Mobile should be in the App Store any day now.

Pinger Phone

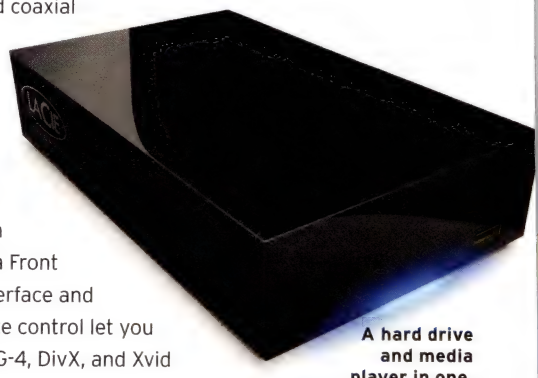
If you're a chronic communicator sick of clicking between the SMS, phone, Mail, Facebook, Twitter, and MySpace apps on your iPhone, Pinger Phone (free, ad supported, www.pinger.com) combines them all with a smart interface. You can see your friends' status updates, plus call, email, text, or IM them all from one contact list, where icons show you who's online at any given moment. iPod touch users can do everything except make calls—even send IMs directly to their friends' mobile phones as SMS text messages.



All together now.

LaCinema Classic

LaCie's (www.lacie.com) latest external drive is ready to take on your whole digital library—and even bring it to your TV—for less money than the Apple TV. LaCinema Classic is a 500GB or 1TB USB 2.0 drive with HDMI and composite video outputs, plus stereo and coaxial SPDIF audio outputs, for connecting to your TV or home entertainment system. Built-in software with a Front Row–esque interface and included remote control let you play your MPEG-4, DivX, and Xvid videos in 1080p HD, plus music and photos too. It's not connected to your network like the Apple TV is, so you can't stream from a computer, but it starts at just $169.99 and dwarfs the Apple TV in storage capacity (an extra USB port even lets you expand).



A hard drive and media player in one.

SHAREWARE PICKS

THE MIGHTY iSIGHT

Your iSight is good for more than just iChat and Photo Booth.

FLUIDTUNES

Majic Jungle Software, fluidtunes.com
Price: Free

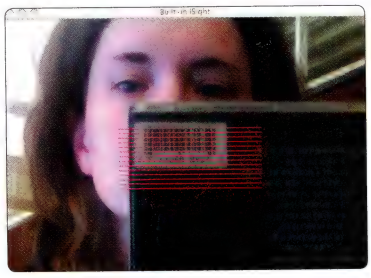
FluidTunes lets you navigate through a Cover Flow–like interface for your iTunes library by simply waving your hands around. "Swipe" through the list with a brisk flick of the wrist, and wave emphatically over large onscreen Play, Stop, Forward, and Back buttons to "push" them. So cool!

It's more a neato novelty than something you'll use every day, but it's way fun to play with.

CDPEDIA

Bruji, www.bruji.com
Price: $18 (bundles also available)

CDpedia catalogues your CD collection, showing you at a glance which albums or tracks are in iTunes, which CDs your friends have borrowed, and much more. The best part is, you can scan your CDs' barcodes with the iSight, and CDpedia automatically fetches all relevant metadata from the Internet.



Hold a CD's bar code up to your iSight, and you can save yourself a lot of manual data entry.

GAWKER

Phil Piwonka, gawker.sourceforge.net
Price: Free

Gawker makes time-lapse movies by taking a still image with your iSight (or other webcam) at set intervals—say, every 30 seconds—and combines them into a QuickTime movie file. Capture your next cocktail party, a loaf of bread dough rising, or just the scene outside your window.

Capturing the scene outside the *Mac|Life* office windows, traffic, sunsets, and all.

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Mac Universal

NEW STUFF

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Get your geek on. And score style points while you're at it.

GLA-55

harman/kardon, harmankardon.com
Price: $999.99

You spend most of your time in front of the computer anyway—might as well invest in some primo speakers. Plus, they kinda remind us of a Superman version of the speakers h/k designed for the Mac Cube back in the day.

Perfect for your Fortress of Solitude.

Just in case you ever need to know the square root of 672,846.

DATABANK DBC32

Casio, www.casio.com
Price: $59

Forget the iPhone! Store all your important data in one of these awesome '80s nerd watches. But now you're no longer limited to Mom's Basement Black—Databank comes in four new colors.

PRECIOUS STONES iPHONE

Goldstriker, www.goldstriker.co.uk
Price: $4,500

White and black are so 2008. What your iPhone really needs is encrusted precious gemstones. It isn't cheap, but you'll be the only person you know with a phone studded with rubies and diamonds. You know you want it!

Now you can update your Facebook status in Donald Trump style.

Security and privacy start with you.

Ensure your security with MacScan

Spyware exists--and it's a growing threat to the online community. As the number of Mac users increases, so do the threats to your personal information. MacScan delivers peace of mind by auditing your computer for spyware and cleaning up clutter from casual Internet browsing to protect privacy and security. MacScan's Cookie Blacklist allows you to safely scan and remove known tracking cookies from popular web browsers.

Be secure: protect your privacy. Get your thirty-day trial of MacScan from **http://macscan.securemac.com/**.

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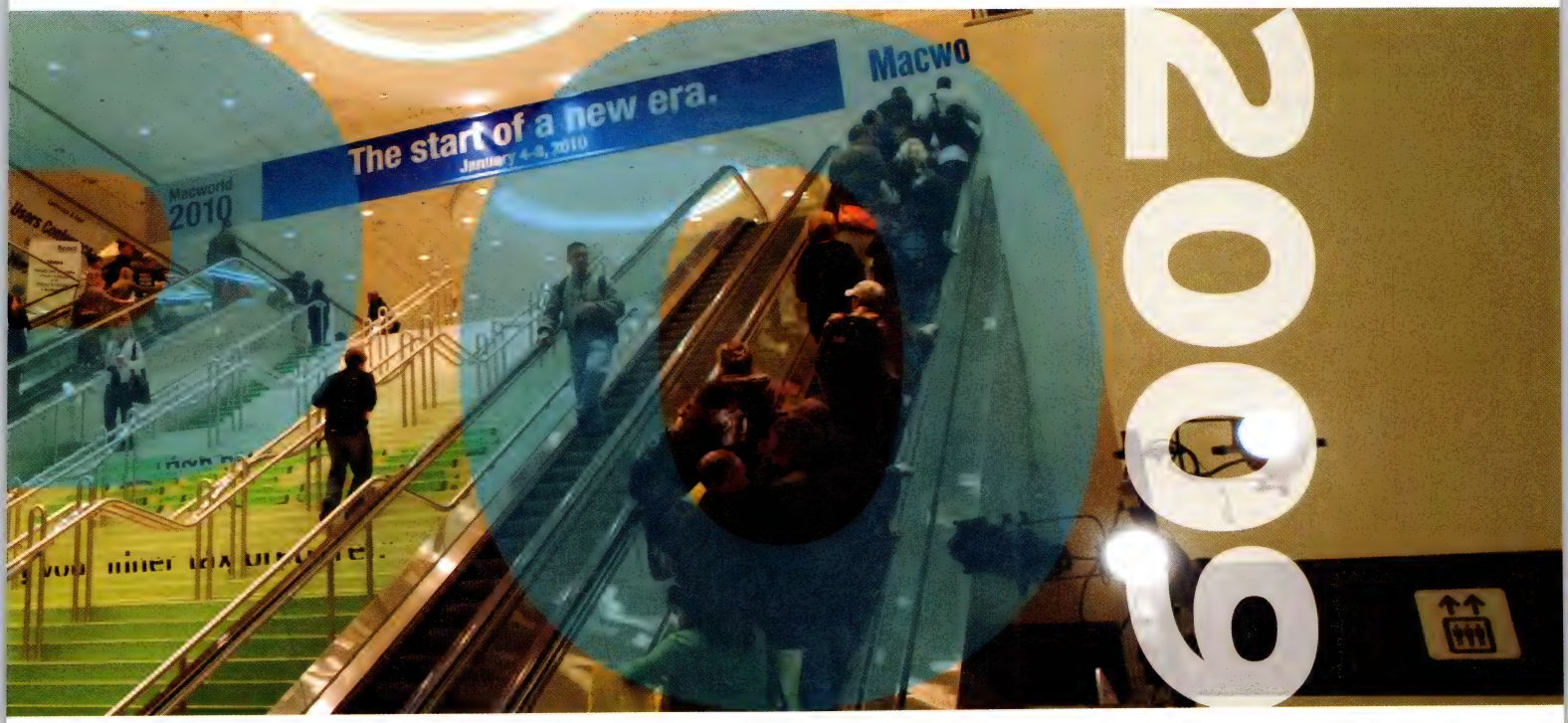
WHAT'S IT ALL MEAN?

THIS YEAR'S MAC GATHERING WAS MARKED BY A STEVE-LESS STEVENOTE, A LOW-KEY VIBE ON THE SHOW FLOOR, AND RELATIVELY MINOR PRODUCT ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM APPLE. STILL, ANYONE INTERESTED IN WHAT'S SHAKING IN THE APPLESPHERE MUST READ OUR REPORT, WHICH OUTLINES WHAT'S NEW AND COOL, AND PUTS IT ALL INTO CONTEXT, SO YOU KNOW HOW IT IMPACTS YOU AS A MAC LIFER.

BY THE *MAC|LIFE* STAFF

PHOTOGRAPHY BY: MARK MADEO



Remember when Steve Jobs announced the coming of the iPhone in January 2007? We only mention it here so you can imagine the palpable excitement that ran through the auditorium that day and compare it to the polite applause that met Senior VP of Worldwide Product Marketing Phil Schiller's announcements during the Mac Expo 2009. Phil gave cool demos of the updates in iLife and iWork '09 and surprised no one by announcing the 17-inch unibody MacBook Pro. But when the lights came up and everyone filed out of the auditorium, the Applesphere remained largely unrevolutionized.

That's the short version. The truth is, the improvements in iLife, iWork, and iTunes that Phil told us about may not be felt for months. Unlike the arrival of a single, sleek, wondrous gadget like the iPhone, Apple's updated consumer suites and eco-friendly big-screen portable Mac will take a while to work their way into the Mac-using universe in a way that's deeply felt.

If your first reaction when you read about the keynote announcements was, "That's *it*?" you're not alone. We admit it—it was tricky coming up with a sexy angle on the story for this issue. But have a little patience: iLife and iWork '09 have a lot of potential, and Apple seemed to promise that there'd be way more cool stuff to come when it invited legendary crooner Tony Bennett to the stage to sing "The Best Is Yet to Come" after the Philnote.

We don't know what's coming from Cupertino in the future, but we can only guess that as long as Steve Jobs is around, it will continue to wow Mac fans and the world at large.

Here's a look at what the Apple's Mac Expo announcements mean to Mac users everywhere.

iLife '09

In 2009 and beyond, the consumer creative suite may just be the bait Apple needs to lure thousands more switchers to abandon their Windows PCs.

FUELED BY DREAMS, POWERED BY IMAGINATION. Matt Groening meant to satirize Steve Jobs and Apple in the "Mapple Store" episode of *The Simpsons* (www.hulu.com/watch/46753/the-simpsons-mapple-store), but when Homer becomes mesmerized by the glowing MyCubes that are "fueled by dreams and powered by imagination," the sales dude might as well have been talking about iLife '09, which features the same creativity apps you already know about and which still ships free on every new Mac. The improvements seem engineering-intensive enough to make us wonder how Apple could ever recoup its R&D costs by selling upgrades for a "mere" $79. (And for anyone who rushed out to buy a brand-new 17-inch MacBook Pro [see p24] in early January after Phil Schiller announced their release at this year's Expo, you can upgrade to iLife '09 from iLife '08 for $9.95 plus tax; see www.apple.com/ilife/uptodate/).

The only conclusion we can draw from the effort Apple poured into iLife is that the company hopes to lure bazillions of new Mac buyers with the promise of the mind-blowingly cool projects they can create with the software suite.

In case you haven't heard, the additions and improvements to the primary iLife apps (iPhoto, iMovie, and GarageBand) are pretty major, especially in the case of iPhoto and GarageBand, and to a smaller degree in iMovie, which was totally rebuilt for the iLife '08 update. The changes in iPhoto and GarageBand represent an interesting mix of advanced technology applied to a consumer product (in the case of iPhoto) and a quite visionary goal to teach every GarageBand user how to *play* an actual musical instrument (more on that later), in addition to bringing sound editing made simple to nonmusic pros.

iLife '09: Available Now

FACES AND PLACES. iPhoto '09's most important improvements are two smart, fun ways to catalog a personal photo collection: by faces (using face detection *and* face recognition technology) and by places (using geotags). If you only take the occasional snapshot of your dog or your drinking buddies, and if you rarely travel farther than your place of residence or business, iPhoto '09 is about as useful to you as a frequent-flier mile program membership and a set of Louis Vuitton luggage. But for a certain swath of Mac users, Faces and Places represent a significantly more efficient—not to mention technically whizzy—way to catalog your snaps.

Your photo library could look like this in iPhoto '09—so go out and get yourself some prettier friends!

In addition to the Events category in iPhoto, Faces and Places sort your image library based on the people in them and the locations where they were taken, respectively. iPhoto '09 wasn't yet shipping as we went to press, but it will be by the time you read this, and we spent quite a bit of time commandeering the attention of Apple booth workers at Mac Expo, having them demo Faces and Places on demand—using Apple's preloaded iPhoto libraries of gorgeous, happy people enjoying good times with their gorgeous, happy friends and families in exotic locales. If your photo collection has at least 200 images in it and/or if it spans more than two years, it's a good bet you're going to get a thrill from and save quite a bit of time with Faces, which creates a snapshot for each person you've entered as a face, then stacks all the photos of that person underneath it automatically, essentially sorting your photo collection by person faster you could ever do it manually.

Places, meanwhile, automatically takes in photos' geotags if they have them, or lets you type in a photo's location. More fun, perhaps, are the ways iPhoto uses location info, allowing you to add maps to your printed and digital photo albums and slide shows, and letting you sort your entire photo library by location, displaying this info in a Google Maps-esque view.

Yes, it's tough to get excited about Places if you don't travel, but even so, we *were* impressed by the effort of the iLife dev team to boost iPhoto's usefulness. Since its photo-editing abilities can only be described as underwhelming—and those features didn't change in iLife '09—iPhoto '09 now has the potential to be the best consumer photo-cataloging app in existence (for photo editing, we prefer the $99 Adobe Photoshop Elements, www.adobe.com).

HI, I'M STING... New to GarageBand '09 is a feature we can't say we predicted—but then, Apple doesn't tend to do the predictable thing. According to Phil, Apple brass tasked the GarageBand team to provide a fun, fast, easy way for users to learn to play the piano or guitar—really *learn* it. To that end, GarageBand now includes music lessons, presented by no-name musicians with pleasant demeanors and nonthreatening names like Tim, as well as artist lessons from famous musicians like John Fogerty, Sting, Sarah McLachlan, Norah Jones, and others.

Each celeb introduces him- or herself in a friendly, warm voice, as if you're meeting each other at a party or over a cup of coffee. You get a video lesson from the artist complete with onscreen finger-placement hints and musical notation. GarageBand '09 comes with a starter kit of preloaded basic lessons; artist lessons are sold separately for $4.99 each in the new GarageBand Lesson Store from within the app.

We're not quite sure where Apple got the idea that users wanted GarageBand to teach them to play an instrument, but it may well pay off when it comes to Mac sales, and will no doubt help Apple keep flogging the notion that Macs are for creative, adventurous types

who want to learn new things, while Windows PCs are for those who'd rather stick to what they already know.

iMOVIE MADE SMARTER. iMovie got some improvements too, which we'll go into in more detail in a future review. Suffice it to say here that it seems clear that Apple heard user complaints that iMovie '08 was fast and easy but just too amateur-oriented. Features like the Precision Editor and automatic image stabilization will come in handy for people who know their way around a video-editing timeline but aren't ready to step up to Final Cut just yet.

This is Tim. He's not famous, but he's really nice and wants you to learn to play the guitar.

John Fogerty tells the story behind "Proud Mary" as he teaches you to play it.

iWork '09

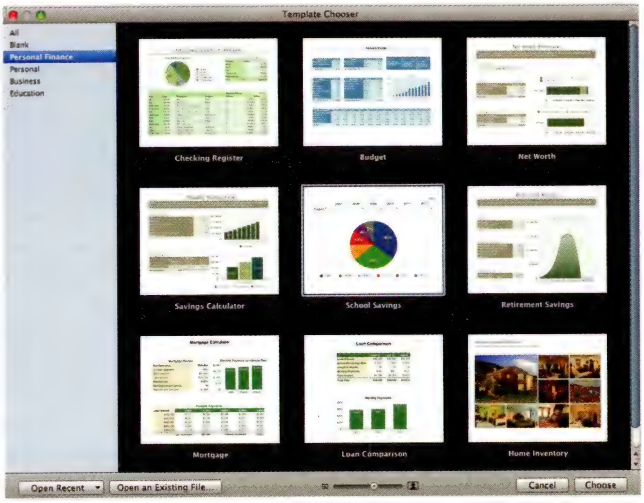
Work usually isn't fun or sexy—and it's not always easy, but iWork '09 can help make word processing, spreadsheet wrangling, and presentation-building a little more of all those good things.

iWork '09, adds more features for everyday Mac folks as well as "pro" users who need to create sophisticated business or academic documents and presentations. These advancements—along with the iWork .com online sharing site—should entice more people to consider Apple's suite over something less elegant like Sun's OpenOffice (free, www.openoffice.org) or something more expensive like Microsoft Office ($399.95, www.microsoft.com).

Across the whole iWork suite, which includes spreadsheet app Numbers '09, word processor Pages '09, and presentation app Keynote '09, toolbar buttons let you upload your documents to iWork.com, which is still in beta—meaning it's free for now, but eventually will become a paid service. From there, you invite others (by email) to view your documents in their browser, where they can also add comments and download their own copies as iWork, PDF, or Microsoft Office files.

This is a great idea, but it's hardly new. Microsoft's Office Live Workspace (workspace .officelive.com) does the same thing, with the addition of versioning tools missing from iWork.com, but it only supports Office formats, and until Office 2008 for Mac gets an update, only Windows users with Microsoft Office 2007 can send documents to Office Live Workspace directly from their Office applications. Google Docs (docs.google .com) lets you create or upload documents for others to view, edit, or download, but it doesn't support native iWork formats at all, just PDF, Microsoft Office, and Open Office. Still, both of those services are free, while iWork.com will cost money to use once it's out of beta. iWork '09 does have built-in options to save documents as PDF or Office formats, and to email iWork, Office, or PDF documents directly from the iWork apps.

iWork '09: Available Now



Among the new templates are a whole host of personal-finance documents in Numbers.

Each iWork app includes more templates to jump-start creativity and make it one-click simple to give your documents a polished look. Pages adds power with an outline view, support for MathType equations and EndNote citations, plus a distraction-killing full-screen view, a critically acclaimed feature of creative-writing-focused Mac apps like Scrivener, WriteRoom, and CopyWrite. In Numbers '09, only the second version of the app, the improved formula builder and copious examples in the Help menus make it much easier for novices to wrangle the 250-plus included functions, while power users get advanced charting options (trend lines, error bars, and the ability to mix chart types) and AppleScript support. Keynote adds snazzy text and object transitions, plus a neat Magic Move feature: If you use the same objects on consecutive slides, the app will auto-animate a transition from one slide to the next. iPhone and iPod touch owners can use the 99-cent Keynote Remote app to control their presentation wirelessly, although a Wi-Fi network is required, since the iPod touch doesn't have Bluetooth.

iWork is available now for $79 or $49 when purchased preloaded on a new Mac. Since it requires Mac OS 10.5 Leopard, Apple is also offering the Mac Box Set (starting in late January when iLife '09 is available), bundling iWork '09, iLife '09, and Leopard for $169, a savings of $118 off buying them separately.

17-inch Unibody MacBook Pro

An ultrathin MacBook pro with a ginormous screen and non-user-removable battery for $2,799? Creative pros, be our guests; we'll wait until the reviews come in to drop our own cash on one.

When Phil Schiller told the crowd at Apple's keynote that he had three things to talk about, we hoped he really meant "three things...in addition to the completely no-brainer announcement of an updated 17-inch MacBook Pro." Because after Apple's October 14, 2008, event introducing the latest MacBook and 15-inch MacBook Pro in their sleek, slim, unibody aluminum enclosures, the eventual arrival of a matching 17-inch MacBook Pro seemed inevitable. The only question was how much the 17-incher would differ from its 15-inch li'l sib.

Now we have our answer: not much, except for that battery. And the 17-inch MBP's battery situation—it features an ultrathin non-user-removable long-life battery—could be a huge advancement or a disaster, although we won't know for sure until long after the machines start shipping to customers in late January.

17-inch MacBook Pro: Available Now

But first, the specs. In the "duh" column are the 17-inch MacBook's recyclable aluminum unibody, plus its mercury- and arsenic-free glass, LED-backlit display, integrated and discrete graphics chips, Mini DisplayPort, and multitouch trackpad. All of that is already featured on the newest 15-inch MacBook Pro.

Even the speed bumps are unsensational. The 17-inch machine can take up to 8GB of RAM (the 15-incher tops out at 4GB). Buyers can upgrade to a 2.93GHz processor on the 17-incher, the fastest ever in a Mac laptop (the 15-incher's fastest is a 2.8GHz chip), and/or a 256GB solid-state hard drive (the 15-incher's biggest SSD is 128GB). You can choose a $50 "antiglare" screen option instead of the standard glossy display, which at least proves that Apple heard the complaints from image pros. Oh, and the 17-inch Mac has three USB 2.0 ports instead of the 15-inch model's measly two. Still awake? That leaves the battery—and only the battery—as the truly big news. In order to keep the 17-inch MacBook Pro less than 1 inch thick, Apple had to nix the removable battery found on every Mac laptop except the MacBook Air, the explanation being that the removal mechanism and user-accessible housing just take up too much space.

Glossy-screen haters can replace the display with an antiglare one for $50 extra.

The video Apple showed (see it online at www.apple.com/macbookpro/17inch-battery/) about its "breakthrough" new technology explained how the totally reengineered battery will last up to 8 hours per charge and have a life span up to 3 times as long. Apple's Adaptive Charging advancement adjusts the current used to charge individual battery cells, which should reduce wear and tear on the battery as a whole, so the battery retains 80 percent of its capacity through 1,000 charge cycles, instead of the 300 charge cycles a typical notebook battery will get. And the battery gets 8 hours per charge by using lithium-polymer cells—since they're thinner than lithium-ion cells, Apple can cram more cells into a smaller space.

This all sounds nifty, but every technology buyer realizes that companies' battery-life claims should be taken with a grain of salt. As of this writing, we have no way of knowing how accurate Apple's claims are, and even after the 17-inch MacBook Pros start shipping, it'll take quite some time for the early adopters to reach 1,000 charge cycles and report back. On-the-go pros, who rely on switching out their machine's battery with a spare, might want to let others play guinea pig for now. Apple's decided that you'd rather have a sub-1-inch-thick laptop than a spare battery—like it or not.

More Music Choices in iTunes

Witness DRM's death on iTunes, and get ready for sweeter-sounding tunes at prices to fit all budgets.

The iTunes news Phil Schiller shared with the crowd on Jan. 6 may be the sleeper hit of the Expo this year. Apple's been in the DRM-free camp for a long time, and Steve really threw down the gauntlet in 2007 with his Thoughts on Music anti-DRM screed. But even if you couldn't care less about copy-protection hassles, the fact that everything in the iTunes Music Store is getting bumped to higher bit rates is good news for everyone who listens to digital music.

DRM-free iTunes: Available in April

Transitioning to 256kbps files means a better sound quality. And you don't need to be a golden-eared audiophile with an $80,000 stereo to hear the difference. With a decent set of earbuds, the difference between older 128kbps files and higher-bit-rate versions becomes apparent pretty quickly. The new tracks offer a much better experience for listeners, and also better ease-of-use, particularly for households with more than a single Mac.

What is DRM? The digital rights management protection on older tracks from the iTunes Store is what keeps you from using your music on more than five computers and limits the number of times you can burn a specific playlist to a disc. It's also what keeps thieves and other assorted jerks—who feel they ought to get paid for going to work but that musicians don't deserve the same—from putting iTunes tracks up on BitTorrent sites, since they

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"The price tag on the new UPS is $99. While I'm not in the habit of endorsing products in this blog, if you're in the market for a workstation-class UPS, why not opt for the greener option?"

- Heather Clancy, ZDNet.com

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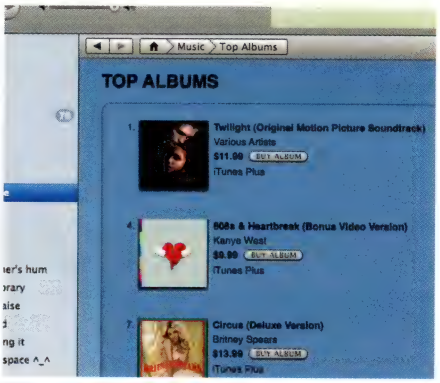
*Average savings are based on comparable competitive models, and are comprised of two energy saving features: An ultra efficient electrical design, and the master/controlled outlets feature.

wouldn't play on other machines anyway.

But pirates, be warned. Just because DRM is dead on iTunes, you can't start torrenting all your Britney albums from iTunes. The files still have your information—including your name and account info—attached to them. Privacy-geeks may balk, but in our minds, it's a small price to pay for files that we can use anywhere we want, any time. Besides, if you really want to steal music, you've probably already done it. In less than five minutes, we found all of iTunes current top 10 albums available illegally elsewhere on the Internet. Despite all the record industry's protestations, DRM isn't doing anything to prevent piracy.

Apple has long been a fan of uniform pricing. Credence Clearwater Revival's "Proud Mary" has traditionally cost the same 99 cents as the latest Kanye jam. But to negotiate DRM-free tracks, Apple had to compromise, letting the labels introduce variable pricing. Starting in April, they'll be able to capitalize on popular songs, charging $1.29, while older catalog tracks will be available for 69 cents and 99 cents. Phil assured us that there will be more songs available for 69 cents than $1.29, but that's a bit of a red herring. By definition, the cheaper tunes won't be the ones most people are buying. Still, we love the new better-sounding, easier-to-manage iTunes tracks, and in fact, we've returned to iTunes after defecting to Amazon's MP3 Store a year or so ago for music downloads. The variable pricing is lame, but overall we're excited to be returning to Apple to feed our music addiction. Navigating the Amazon store always kind of sucked, and we prefer AAC files to MP3 anyway.



At press time, many albums were already 256kbps and DRM-free. By the end of March, all 10 million songs in the store will follow suit.

EXPO WITHOUT APPLE: END OF AN ERA

We hate to be negative Nellies, but it's hard to imagine Mac Expo staying alive much longer without Apple as an anchor.

IDG, the folks behind the annual Macworld Expo, have been touting next year's Mac Expo as "the start of a new era," but Macworld 2010 will more likely be the end of an era.

For Apple, the decision to pull out of the annual expo is probably in its best interest. The timing of the event doesn't coincide with Apple's timetable of release dates, for one thing. And many an Apple employee has deferred his or her winter holiday celebrations in order to finish a project in time for Expo. Add in the fact that Apple doesn't control the event itself, it's a surprise Apple didn't pull out of the show earlier.

That said, unless you're one of the lucky journalists who's able to secure a spot at one of Apple's special events, your chance of seeing a Stevenote in person is now pretty much zero. The Mac Expo keynote was the one yearly chance Joe Mac User got to see Steve Jobs and his RDF in person. Sure it would cost you an arm and a leg, but for some, it was worth it. The Worldwide Developers Conference is your only chance now—and who has time to learn Objective C and come up with the thousands of dollars it takes to become an ADC member?

Even if you couldn't get into the keynote, in the past, the Expo floor was an opportunity to spend four glorious days with like-minded individuals. You could quiz vendors about their products and fill bags with mostly worthless swag that would take up precious attic and garage space for years to come.

Mac Expo was the Mac-loving community's chance to share a common experience. To escape the Windows world for just few days. In the lean years, it was a warm fuzzy place where being taunted for using the best computer in the world was unthinkable. It has been our collective happy place.

Even before joining the *Mac|Life* staff, many of us did everything we could to go to every Mac Expo. We'd take time off work, ditch college classes, and, in the case of online editor Roberto Baldwin, whose birthday in early January often "conflicted" with at least one day of the weeklong expo, he'd postpone any celebrations until the show was over. Many Mac fans can probably tell the same story. We're dedicated to our computing platform of choice and the company behind it. Apple's pullout from Expo throws the event's survival into question for sure, though IDG says it's committed to Mac Expo 2010 and is hoping to continue the show for a long time to come.

It'll be difficult without Apple as the heart of the show, its glowing white logo shining a light on its league of followers. Adobe pulled out of this year's event and many vendors are prepared to follow in the companies' footsteps unless something dramatic happens. Without a critical mass of exhibitors, IDG has little incentive to keep the show going.

By the time next year's Expo rolls around we'll have a better idea of what to expect. We hope it'll continue to be a place where the average Mac user can go to meet other Mac users and learn about the latest and greatest innovations and products. It'll be strange not to see Apple's booth front and center in the South Hall of Moscone Center, but maybe the community can keep the dream alive.

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Is It Just Us or Is Apple Running out of Big Ideas?

We couldn't help feeling let down when iLife and iWork '09 hogged the Mac Expo keynote spotlight. Did the iPhone set the bar too high, or is Apple hitting a wall when it comes to innovation? We ponder these questions—and reveal what we wish Apple had announced.

I don't make it my business to heckle Apple or pelt it with rotten tomatoes in *Mac|Life*. After all, if the company prospers, we stand to do the same. But they threw me a curveball in January when—at the last Apple keynote address at Mac Expo ever—Senior VP of Worldwide Product Marketing Phil Schiller kicked things off by saying his talk would focus on the Mac, then announcing new versions of iLife and iWork, the availability of a 17-inch super eco-friendly aluminum unibody MacBook Pro to complete the "world's greenest line of notebooks," the inevitability of variably priced, DRM-free songs in the iTunes Store, and...well, that's it. "That's it?!" I thought. "That's *really* it?"

Forget for a moment that Schiller took Steve Jobs' usual spot onstage so Steve could start on his road to recovery from a hormone imbalance that left his body unable to properly process certain proteins—contributing to noticeable weight loss in mid- to late 2008 (in almost direct proportion, incidentally, to Oprah's weight gain in the same period).

Steve's absence set the tone for the Jan. 6 address, but I doubt I was alone in hoping—nay, *praying*—that Apple would pull off some kind of stunner, with or without Steve there to whip the audience into a frenzy of Apple worship. But no.

Not to dis Phil—he did his well-meaning best. The capper—a live appearance by Tony Bennett, who sang "The Best Is Yet to Come" and "I Left My Heart in San Francisco"—helped soothe my disappointment somewhat, but Tony's no updated Mac mini, and his dulcet tones won't stream media to every room in my house the way a hybrid Mac mini/Apple TV could have. And while I appreciate the optimism in the choice of Bennett's first number, the raging cynic in me couldn't help but feel conned.

When a company tells you everything's going swimmingly, doesn't that often mean just the opposite?

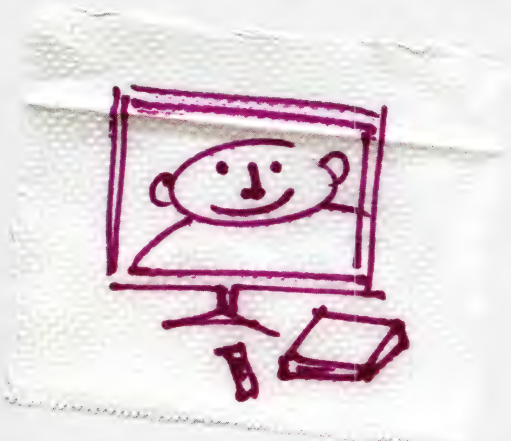
But hold on. There have been more than a few underwhelming Stevenotes in the past... and Apple has almost always made up for them up later with truly awesome product announcements.

Since we don't have any way to know what's really going on inside Apple's creative braintrust, and since the company has wowed us and the world with an array of kick-ass new Macs and other hardware since early 2007, we're willing to let them slide this time with a gentle slap on the wrist and a collection of things we'll keep on our wish lists until they materialize in some shape or form at our nearest Apple Store.

For me, it's a souped-up, Intel processor-based Mac mini, so I can once and for all convert my family to the way of the Mac and—finally—put things right in my personal tech universe.—*Leslie Ayers*

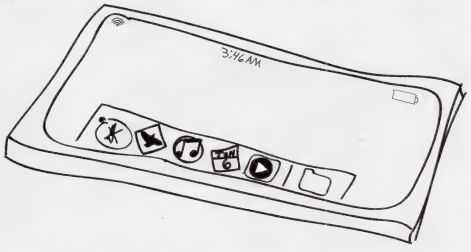
What We Wish Apple Had Announced

MiniTV



Ever since the Mac Mini was released in 2005, Mac users have been crowing about the unit's potential as a media center. And then there's the Apple TV—dead simple to use and optimized for media. But neither is perfect. Using a Mac mini on your TV is more complicated than it sounds, and DVR software options are clunky at best. The Apple TV can't surf the Net to take advantage of streaming sites like Hulu, and it can only sync or stream—you can't just dump content onto your Apple TV over a network. Which is where the MiniTV comes in. The simplicity of Apple TV with the flexibility of a Mac Mini, optimized for media of all types. Oh, and a Blu-Ray drive would be the cherry on top.
—Ray Aguilera

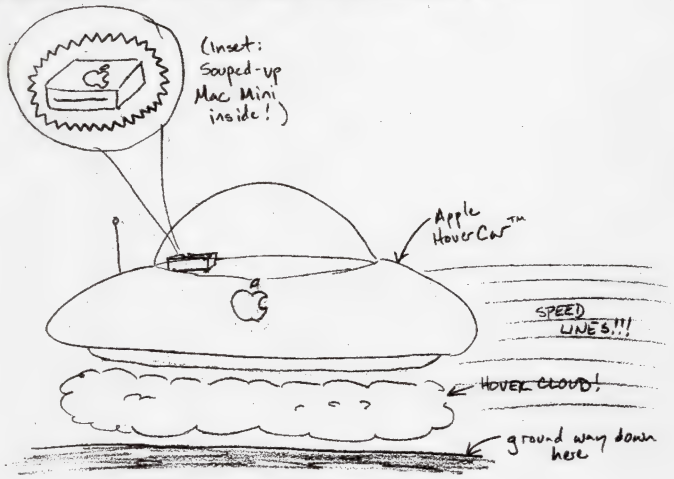
iPod touch Tablet



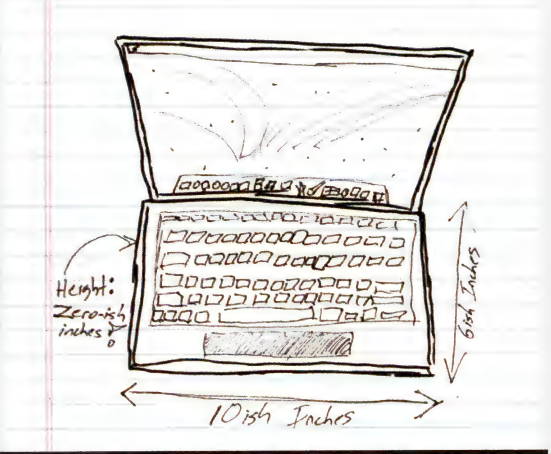
Imagine an iPod touch with roughly two times more touchscreen real estate and the ability to run many of the same applications your regular Mac runs. That's what I wanted more than anything to be announced at the Philnote. Oh sure, there was a better chance of Steve doing a cameo by moonwalking across the stage to the "Humpty Dance," but a guy can dream.

More powerful than the iPhone, but more portable than a MacBook. The iPod touch tablet lets you run iPhone apps and optimized OS X apps on one device. This melding of netbook and tablet Mac would have made Apple's last Mac Expo keynote one to remember.
—Roberto Baldwin

Updated Mac Mini—Complete with Apple Hovercar



Count me among those who were bitterly disappointed that the Mac mini, last quietly updated in August 2007, wasn't upgraded—or even mentioned in the keynote whatsoever. The lowest-priced, most-versatile Mac is a great entry-level point for switchers to the platform, plus its unique form-factor makes it easy to put in places an iMac or laptop won't work as well—including hacked into the dashboard of my Apple Hovercar, also conspicuously absent from Phil's announcements.—*Susie Ochs*



MacBook Mini

Please, Apple, deliver the MacBook Mini—and do so before Mac Expo 2010. My MacBook Pro isn't nearly portable enough for trade show duties, and with all the floor-walking and press kit-collecting I do during Expo—and then CES—I need a notebook that will almost literally disappear inside a backpack. The PC industry has gone "netbook" crazy, so I'm pretty sure a wee 6-by-10-inch MacBook with a full keyboard and multitouch is well within the realm of Cupertinoian magic. (Remember the Mac Mini? The iPod nano? You guys are famous for making things smaller.) Bottom line: If you create a MacBook that's about the size of a well-addressed hoagie, you'll get back all the buzz you lost with that very ho-humsy 2009 keynote reveal.—*Jon Phillips*

10 REASONS YOUR SMALL BUSINESS SHOULD RUN ON MACS

IT'S ABOUT RELIABILITY, EASE OF USE, AND SLEEK SOPHISTICATION. BUT THOSE ARE JUST 3 OF THE 10 REASONS WHY WE THINK YOU SHOULD BE OPERATING YOUR SMALL BUSINESS ON THE MAC PLATFORM. WE PROFILE SEVEN BUSINESSES THAT HAVE MADE EXACTLY THAT CHOICE—AND NEVER LOOKED BACK.

BY JASON WHONG PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATTHEW CARDEN

The Macintosh, a computer that for over two decades has been the choice of creative professionals, is being adopted by more small businesses, a market segment that has traditionally been dominated by computers running Microsoft Windows. Apple has tried off and on since 1985 to pitch the Mac as a business machine, and the Macs of today are easily the most business-capable computers Apple has ever shipped.

. If you're a business owner or thinking of becoming one, you may be surprised by how useful a Mac can be and how it can save your company money in the long run. We've talked to business owners, scoured the Internet, and come up with the top ten reasons your small business should switch to Mac.

1 INDUSTRIAL DESIGN

Apple's reputation for good hardware design owes a lot to what its designers have done in the last 10 years. In 1998, the eye-catching curvy shape of the iMac helped forge a whimsical identity for the Mac, but its Bondi blue color and bulbous body didn't complement every office's décor. These days, the company's designers are working with anodized aluminum casings with black or white accents that go with just about anything. Whether your desk surface is cherry, plum, or an unfinished plywood sheet, a new Mac will look great on it.

Having Macs in your office or shop sends a signal about your company's philosophy: You understand good design and appreciate quality and simplicity. It could also signify how "with it" your company is, how creatively your employees think, or even how intelligently you manage the business.

Because most of your customers likely use Windows PCs at home and work, the Mac they see in your office will make an impression. Then, every time they see an Apple advertisement, there's a chance they'll think of you.

2 iLIFE'S SURPRISING BUSINESS USES

Every Mac comes with iLife, Apple's software for working with photos, music, video, and webpages, as well as iTunes and iCal. Just because most people use these apps in their homes doesn't mean you can't use them for work.

iTunes can do more than just play music in your office; it's also a great general-purpose audio sequencer, which you can use to shape the soundscape of your office or store. You can even insert marketing messages between music tracks. If your phone system lets you connect a CD player or other audio source for people to listen to while they're on hold, you can use iTunes to burn CDs with playlists that set the right tone or mood for your business. Be sure to include a "thanks for holding" message between songs, to keep customers on the line.

You can also use iPhoto as a still-image sequencer. Perhaps your business won't benefit from a slide show, but it might benefit from a slide show with helpful information on a continuous loop. If your company is undercapitalized, you can use iPhoto as presentation software, using the arrow keys to change slides manually.

GarageBand isn't just an audio editor. You can use its recording capabilities to create those marketing messages for the iTunes playlist or the customer-service message for the hold CD. Use the provided royalty-free audio loops to make music underneath your message, and if you time it right, you'll have a perfect thirty-second cut to use as a radio advertisement.

With iWeb, you can build a simple website from professionally designed theme templates. iMovie lends itself to making videos to attract more customers over the Internet or ad spots for television. iCal can help you make schedules for your employees and keep track of appointments.

For details on improvements in iLife '09, available now, see p22.

COMPANY: Intermedia, Ltd. **EMPLOYEES:** 2 **LOCATION:** Nagano, Japan

Choosing the Mac was a no-brainer for Intermedia, a provider of Japanese-English translation services to mostly Japanese clientele. "A well-configured Mac becomes a seamless extension of your mind, in a way that no other combination of software and hardware can," says Intermedia owner Brian Rafter. "That makes work more productive, less stressful, and a whole lot more fun."

The Mac has long been a leader in multiple-display setups, and Intermedia takes advantage of this ability with a 23-inch Apple Cinema Display as its main monitor, flanked by two 20-inch Apple Cinema Displays. A fourth display is also within view. Typically, Rafter keeps the previous year's version of a document in Japanese and English on the left monitor, the current year's versions appear in the main screen, and reference documents are visible with a glance to the right.

Rafter uses Mac OS X's Spaces feature, which enables multiple workspaces for each display, to switch seamlessly from one project to another. Since he juggles anywhere from five to six projects at a time, each project will have its own workspace, available instantly.

When Intermedia's clients required it, Rafter used to translate on Windows PCs. Since switching to the Mac, his translation word count per day has gone up by about 25 percent, which gave him more time to craft definitions like "the difference in the radii of the arcs traced by the front and rear inner wheels of a turning car" to represent the Japanese *nairinsa,* an obscure word that pops up every now and then.

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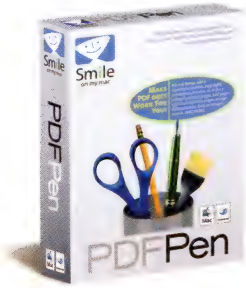

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3 YOU CAN RUN WINDOWS APPS IF NECESSARY

It's difficult to justify buying a Mac to run software for Microsoft Windows, but that's not the reason the compatibility factor makes this list. Rather, it's knowing that your investment in Mac hardware won't prevent you from using Windows software in the future—if you ever need to—that makes good sense. You can control the processes in your office, so you'll run Mac software in-house. You can't control the processes of other organizations, some of which may require compatibility with Windows.

While a Mac isn't capable of running Windows apps out of the box, there are a number of options available that are cheaper than running out and buying a Windows-based computer. Apple's Boot Camp software, part of Mac OS X Leopard, enables you to install your copy of Windows onto the Mac and lets you choose which operating system you'll boot into.

If you prefer to use Windows programs without rebooting, you can try VMware Fusion ($79.99, www.vmware.com) or Parallels Desktop ($79.99, www.parallels.com), both of which require a copy of Windows. If you don't have Windows, try CodeWeavers CrossOver ($39.95, www.codeweavers.com/), though it doesn't run as many programs as the other two.

4 RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Corporations study the "total cost of ownership" of their technology to decide whether a computer system is worth purchasing. Businesses of all sizes find that the Mac platform can save money over time, despite the higher price tag associated with the initial purchase.

The Mac's greatest ally in calculating cost of ownership is the value of time. Business owners say their Macs experience fewer crashes and other problems than PCs running Windows, translating to less lost work and fewer visits from the IT folks. They also tend to keep Macs in service longer than they keep PCs running.

The time calculation works both ways: You'll have to place a value on retraining employees on the new operating system and lost time and increased agitation due to slightly different keyboard layouts and a different OS. You'll also need to budget for Mac versions of the software you plan to run. (Of course, you would probably also have some retraining and software costs upgrading from XP to Vista if you stuck with Windows.) If you're starting a new business, you can skip the costs associated with switching.

5 SECURITY

Part of the reason businesses report more uptime with the Mac is because of the Mac's built-in security features that keep viruses and malware at bay. A Mac won't run Windows software right out of the box, so most of the malware lurking on the Internet won't harm a Mac. The same goes with viruses that affect Windows users: With no version of Windows to run on, a virus will sit unused, unable to replicate itself.

Because viruses and malware are not a serious threat on Mac OS X yet, attackers have to fool unsuspecting Mac users into installing malware themselves. Apple's Safari, Mail, and iChat software all notice when downloads contain applications, and tell Leopard to warn you the first time you open the software, hopefully thwarting the security breach.

The sunny state of Mac security may not last forever, of course: As more people connect their Macs to the Internet, attackers may take more of an interest in learning new ways to compromise them. Even so, experts have been saying this over the last decade, but the threats still haven't shown up in large numbers.

6 TIME MACHINE

Backups are tedious, time consuming, and inconvenient to schedules, but they're critical for all businesses, especially small ones that don't have IT departments in charge of such things. Mac OS X Leopard's built-in backup software, Time Machine, backs up documents automatically. Should you accidentally delete your tax return, payroll info, or even if you just destroy part of it, you can easily call up Time Machine and travel backwards in hours, days, or weeks through time—onscreen, of course—until you find the particular file you were looking for.

Because it's automatic, you don't need to force your employees to come in on the weekends to babysit the backup. It's a tradeoff, however: Time Machine stores its backup information on an attached hard drive, a Leopard server, or a Time Capsule wireless storage device (www.apple.com, $299 for 500GB). Time Machine won't make a copy that you can take off-site in case your office burns down, and it won't let you keep stuff indefinitely (when the drive fills up, it starts deleting weekly backups). Still, it's a lot better than no backup at all, and it's easy to restore individual files quickly, without needing to spelunk through piles of removable media for an earlier version of the file. Think of it as a "Time- and Bacon-saving Machine" when calculating its benefit to your business.

COMPANY: Stevens MacPhail, P.A. **EMPLOYEES:** 4 **LOCATION:** Spartanburg, South Carolina

Family-law firm Stevens MacPhail switched to a Mac platform in August 2005. "I got tired of wasting time and money dealing with one problem after another with our PCs and network," says Ben Stevens, one of the company's two attorneys. "It seemed that we were having at least one issue a week that was affecting our ability to most effectively represent our clients, and that was not acceptable."

Since the switch, the company's tech-support costs were reduced to almost nothing. (The company still uses a Windows server that requires troubleshooting.) Stevens reports 100 percent uptime on the company's Macs. He also says his employees are happier: "Anything that can be done on a PC can be done on a Mac, and usually faster, better, and more enjoyably," he says.

The company uses each of the apps in iWork. Stevens is especially fond of Keynote for his presentations. Rocket Matter ($50/month, rocketmatter.com), a Web-based app, is the company's choice for case management. Stevens MacPhail uses a combination of Parallels Desktop and Microsoft Remote Desktop Connection to run two Windows apps: QuickBooks (because the Windows version has better payroll features than the Mac version, they say), and South Carolina's child-support calculator, which has no Mac version.

Stevens uses a MacBook Air and his partner uses a 15-inch PowerBook from 2005 that he likes too much to upgrade. The company's two legal assistants use 20-inch iMacs. "We often have clients and other visitors to our office comment on how 'pretty' their computers are," says Stevens, who also publishes a legal Mac-tech blog, themaclawyer.com.

7 iWORK

Apple's iWork software does a lot for just $79. The Pages word processor, Numbers spreadsheet, and Keynote presentation software let you take advantage of Apple's army of designers and software engineers to make your company's documents and presentations stand apart from generic business documents. Naturally, iWork is available exclusively on the Mac. (For *Mac|Life* reviews of iWork '08, see Nov/'07, p20, or search for each app's name at www.maclife.com.)

In addition to great-looking documents, iWork can also open and save Microsoft Office 2007 Word, Excel, and PowerPoint documents, letting your business exchange files with Office users in a Microsoft-dominated world. And at just $79, iWork is a lot less expensive than Microsoft Office 2008 for Mac ($299.95, www.microsoft.com/mac).

You can use Pages to create all kinds of great-looking newsletters, flyers, "take one" sheets, brochures, and other documents. Numbers can keep track of your company's cash flow, and help you create beautiful 2D and 3D charts to help your employees, associates, and investors visualize what the data really mean. Keynote helps you prepare unforgettable presentations. iWork isn't for everyone, but it's a capable software suite.

8 YOU CAN RUN MICROSOFT OFFICE

Despite no love lost between Bill Gates and Steve Jobs, Microsoft continues to improve upon the Office suite for OS X. Office 2008 for Mac includes Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Entourage (the Mac version of Outlook, if you've used it in past work environments) and sports a few Mac-only features to balance out what it lacks.

Word 2008 for Mac offers one big advantage over Word 2007 for Windows: Its Page Layout view makes it easy to create elegant-looking documents. Excel 2008 includes premade ledger sheets, making it easy to keep track of finances without worrying about how to set up a spreadsheet.

If your office already runs a Microsoft Exchange server, you can use Entourage to connect to the server and use most of the features that full-fledged Outlook users can use, including email, calendaring, and contact management. Windows Outlook users have no parallel to Entourage's My Day feature, which lets you see your schedule at a glance in a single window on your Desktop.

COMPANY: Spruce Body Lab **EMPLOYEES:** 12 **LOCATION:** Vancouver, British Columbia

Customers visiting Spruce Body Lab for services like microdermabrasion or massage will notice the day spa's calming design: subtle use of color; a logo in shades of green, suggesting new life; and a white iMac G5 at the front counter.

That iMac isn't just for show: The spa uses Xsilva LightSpeed (from $1098/single user, www.xsilva.com/features.php) point-of-sale software to handle invoices, inventory, and a customer database. LightSpeed even integrates with iCal for scheduling appointments.

"The Mac is a user-friendly and high-quality product with attention to detail," says Kathryn Sawers, the company's creative director and general manager. "It is a good fit for our business from an aesthetic perspective as well: We are a very modern and polished facility, and the Mac design complements that."

The company uses Adobe Creative Suite for marketing materials, Adobe Contribute to update its website at sprucebodylab.com, and Microsoft Office for word processing, invoicing, and other business tasks.

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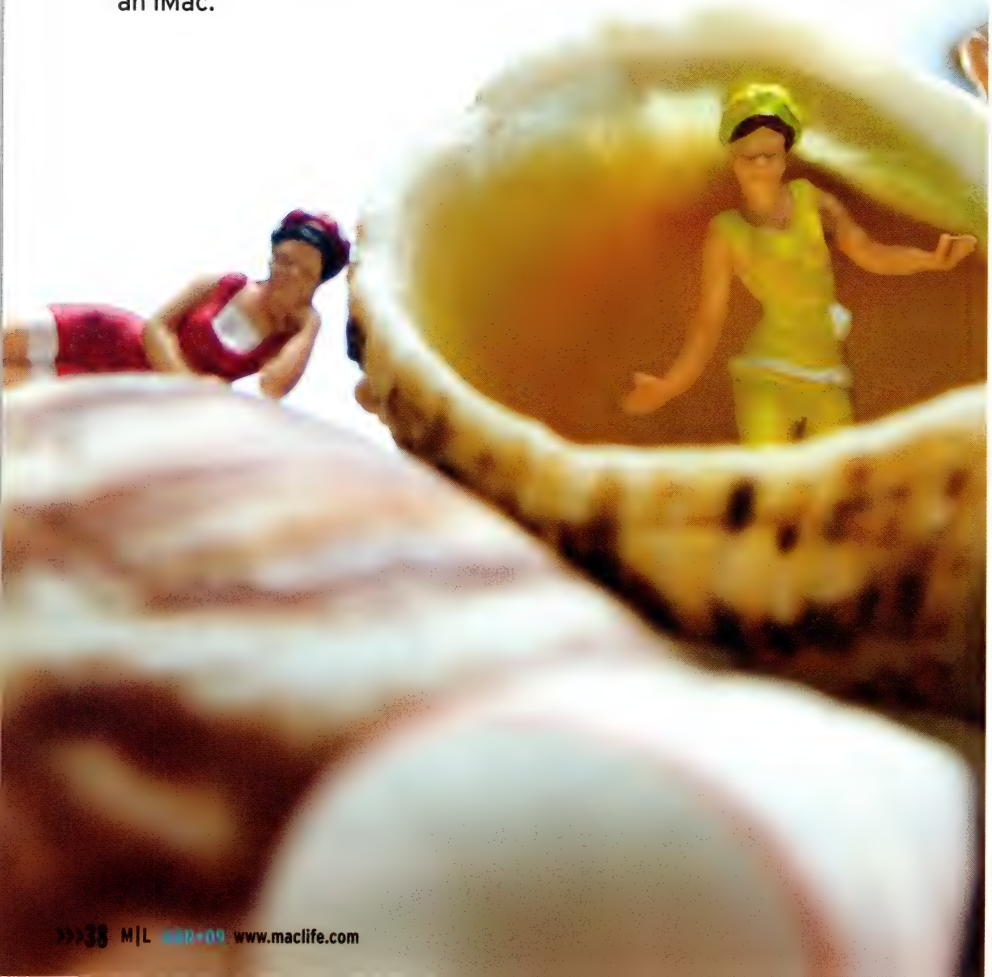
COMPANY: Sea Shell City **EMPLOYEES:** 40
LOCATION: Fenwick Island, Delaware

When it's raining in the beach resort town of Fenwick Island, Delaware, vacationers head to the shops on Coastal Highway. The staff at Sea Shell City, a longtime landmark of the town, loves rainy days.

They also love the Macintosh, using six iMacs as cash registers, plus more iMacs and a Mac mini for the business office and mail-order operations. The company has only one PC, tucked away in a back office. Though many of the store's seasonal workers come from countries where Microsoft Windows dominates even more than in the U.S., the store hasn't received many complaints from workers about the Mac. In fact, the workers catch on quickly.

"The only problem we have noticed sometimes is that the foreign employees like to go online when no one is looking to check mail from home and the news," says Virginia Davidson, who helps her family run the business. "We hope in the future to have a lounge set up so that during their free time they can connect with home a little easier."

Sea Shell City uses ShopKeeper ($1395/multiple user, www.shopkeeper.com/) for its point-of-sale software, and MYOB for accounting. Its website, at seashellcity.com, is served from an iMac.



9 CHEAPER LICENSING FEES FOR SERVERS

If you've ever bought a server for a Windows network, you know how they get you. Hint: It's the licensing fees. Microsoft Windows Small Business Server, for example, has a retail price of $1,089. For that price, five clients can connect to the server. Each additional client costs $77. If you opt instead for a full-fledged copy of Windows Server 2008 and Exchange Server 2007, the pricing structure is even more complex.

Mac OS X server costs $999 and includes an unlimited client license, making the accounting simple. It uses the familiar Mac interface, so you don't need to go out and get a certification before you set up your network. It's got the communication and management capabilities you'd expect for a small business, and some you might not have thought about, such as a Wiki Server to make your intranet more collaborative and flexible. And, as your business grows, you don't have to shell out for more client licenses.

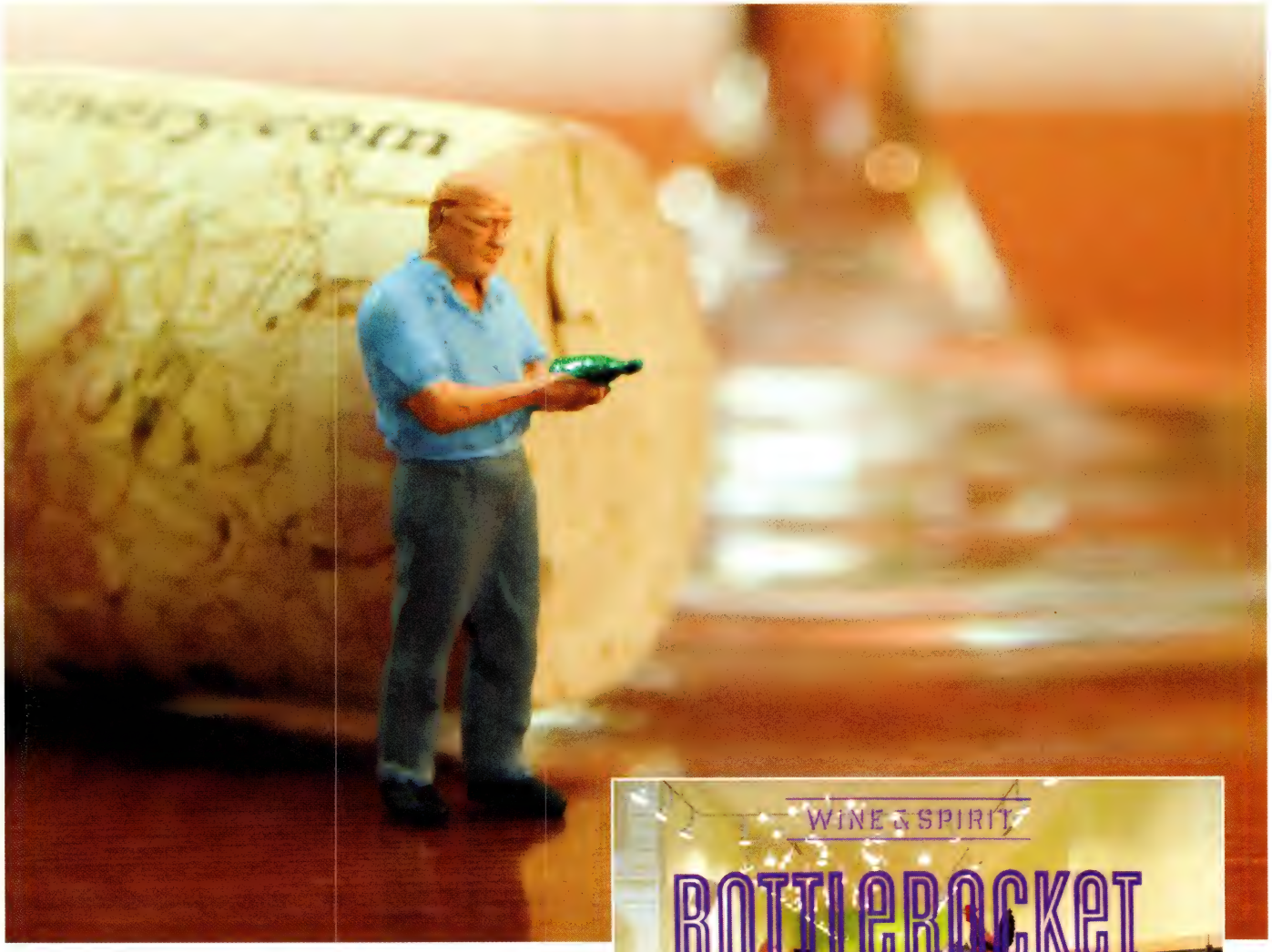
10 BECAUSE IT'S A MAC

Apple has made the Mac the best computing experience available, so why would you accept anything less for your business? Sure, Macs costs more than low-end PCs initially, but isn't it worth it in the end to pay a little bit more up front for a computer that works *with* you, rather than against you? Mac users love their computers, so, if you can, it makes nothing but sense to bring that to your business. The strides Apple has made in offering business solutions over the past decade are making the Mac a more sensible choice, as our profiles of Mac-using businesses throughout this article prove.

SMALL BUT MIGHTY

Matthew Carden is a food and lifestyle photographer based in Novato, California. He runs and manages his own Mac-based studio, where he shoots still lifes with mini model-train figurines (see "Up with Little People," p48, and visit www.matthewcarden.com).

COMPANY: Bottlerocket Wine & Spirit **EMPLOYEES:** 12 **LOCATION:** New York City



Bottlerocket Wine & Spirit was ranked second in Zagat's New York City Gourmet Shopping and Entertaining 2008 and 2009. It's no surprise that the shop is doing so well: Its founder, Tom Geniesse, understands that a good shopping experience makes customers happier and keeps them coming back.

Naturally, Geniesse is a Mac user. "I love Apple and always have. The company designs with people in mind. They provide an excellent, intuitive, and beautiful experience. We are trying to do the same thing at Bottlerocket."

Geniesse is really trying, and customers notice. For customers with kids, for example, there's a "children's nook" with toys and books to keep them busy. Customers can bring dogs in too; the shop provides water and dog treats. Themed display islands, organized by intended use of the wine, make selection easier for novices. Each bottle also has tasting notes posted nearby.

The company chose PayGo ($349/year, //paygopos.com/) as its point-of-sale software, and uses it to offer better service: The tasting notes for each wine are stored in PayGo's database, so customers receive each bottle's tasting notes with their receipt. Bottlerocket also uses PayGo to power its website's shopping cart, running on "a big fat [Apple] Xserve," at bottlerocketwine.com.

COMPANY: Arockalypse **EMPLOYEES:** 3 **LOCATION:** Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

When Arockalypse founder Jeff Mains was starting his skateboarding, footwear, and clothing shop, he went into it with an open mind: Though he was a Mac user with a degree in graphic design, he would be willing to accept a Windows-based point-of-sale solution for his business, if it were the best choice.

"After researching many other specialty retailers that I know through our industry, I realized so many people were not happy with PC-based POS," says Mains, who opened the shop after years of working as a marketing representative for some of the clothes he now sells in the store. "I had researched LightSpeed through Apple, and after months of considering, and researching, it was apparent that Mac and Xsilva were appropriate to our needs. It also fits our business ideals, style, and standard."

Mains says that as the Mac gains mainstream

popularity, his customers have started to ask about it when they see one in the store. He responds with the reasons the Mac is better. Mains' passion for the Mac is much like his passion for skateboarding.

The company also uses the Mac to design apparel, skateboards, and its website, which is packed with action photos and video of local skaters, at arockalypsenow.com.

>>Jason Whong will be starting his Mac-based small business any decade now.

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Apple announced MobileMe in June 2008 with big promises that it would become the data-sync service "for the rest of us." But when it launched on June 30, those promises quickly turned hollow when problems plagued the service. In an uncharacteristic mea culpa, Apple admitted in mid-July that it had released MobileMe before it was ready, automatically extending all paid subscriptions by 30 days.

Not quite a year later, the service works as smoothly as advertised. Still, there are several handy ways to customize MobileMe so it behaves exactly how you want it to. Though Apple continues to improve MobileMe's Help functions, we dug around to come up with a shortlist of easy customization tricks you won't easily find within MobileMe's built-in Help or in Apple's support knowledge base.

MODIFY THE SYNC FREQUENCY FROM THE 15-MINUTE DEFAULT

The only issue we wish Apple would address is the frequency of automatic syncs, which defaults to every 15 minutes—it's just not often enough. However, if you're willing to spend $25 and put on your true Mac geek hat for a few minutes, there is a way to change the 15-minute sync interval so MobileMe syncs more often.

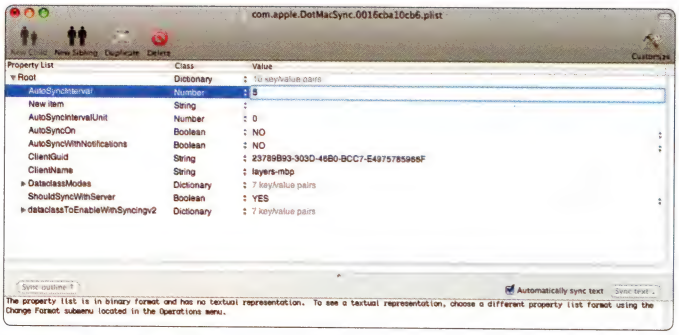
A caveat: This tip involves editing a .plist file, which isn't something average Mac users are generally encouraged to do—or interested in bothering with. A .plist file is a property list, essentially a list of user settings for certain apps or functions on your Mac. Property lists are different for different user accounts (more on that below).

Start by installing PList Edit Pro ($24.95, www.fatcatsoftware.com/plisteditpro). Locate the .plist file for MobileMe syncing frequency, located on your Mac here: ~/Library/Preferences/ByHost/com.apple.DotMacSync.your_MAC_address.plist.

Since you want to edit the property list for yourself (and any other user account on your Mac), start in the folder on your hard drive most likely named with your first initial and last name (or the first initial and last name of each user on your Mac).

Once you've opened com.apple.DotMacSync.your_MAC_address.plist in PList Edit Pro, you'll see an item under Root called AutoSyncInterval. If you've set up MobileMe to sync automatically in System Preferences, the number that will show up is 15. Double-click 15 and change it to the sync frequency you prefer. We changed ours to 5, for example, so MobileMe would sync every 5 minutes. Save the file (Command-S) and close it. Your MobileMe data should now sync at the interval you've selected.

If you assume choosing automatic syncing for MobileMe in your System Preferences will enable instantaneous data exchange among your Mac(s), iPhone, and "the cloud," you'd be wrong. Auto sync only happens every 15 minutes.



It takes a little wrangling—and a $25 cash outlay for PList Edit Pro—but the app lets you easily change the MobileMe sync frequency from 15 minutes to an interval of your choosing.

TRICK MOBILEME INTO SYNCING YOUR iCAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

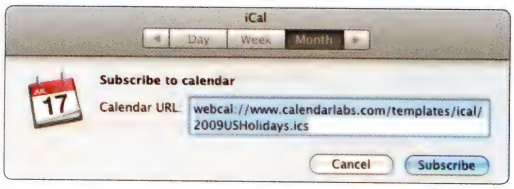
MobileMe doesn't automatically add iCal calendar subscriptions to your calendar in MobileMe, but there is a workaround that allows you to get the info into your calendar across multiple computers and your iPhone or iPod touch.

Start by subscribing to the iCal calendar(s) you want: On your Mac, launch your Web browser and visit www.calendarlabs.com/ical-calendar-holidays.php. You're presented with a number of choices for 2009 federal holiday calendars. (While you'd think it would be simple enough to grab the 2009 U.S. holiday calendar from Apple's site, we found it faster to get the file from CalendarLabs, www.calendarlabs.com/). In addition to federal holidays, Apple's site has calendars for the moon phases, sports team schedules, and many more. Click on the calendar you want to subscribe to. A window appears asking what app to use to open the file. Find iCal in your Applications folder. When you select iCal and click Open, you're shifted to an iCal window with the URL to that calendar subscription. To add it to iCal, click Subscribe.

To save a few clicks, in iCal, choose Calendar > Subscribe, type in the URL shown in the screenshot, and click Subscribe.

Now you have to trick iCal and MobileMe into adding the iCal subscription(s) to MobileMe by exporting each one, then importing it back in to iCal, then syncing. In the case of our 2009 U.S. holidays, in the iCal sidebar, select the calendar subscription you want to sync to MobileMe, then choose File > Export and save it someplace easy, like your Desktop. Next, in iCal, uncheck the calendar you just exported to avoid duplication on the local iCal Mac, choose File > Import, select the Import An iCal File radio button, click Import, and select the file you just saved to your Desktop (it should have a file extension of .ics). To avoid confusion, in your iCal calendars list, rename the calendar so it's different from the name of the calendar listed under Subscriptions; we changed the name *U.S. Holidays* to just *holidays*, for example.

Sync this new calendar to other Macs via MobileMe: On the Mac on which you just subscribed to the new calendar, sync to MobileMe by choosing

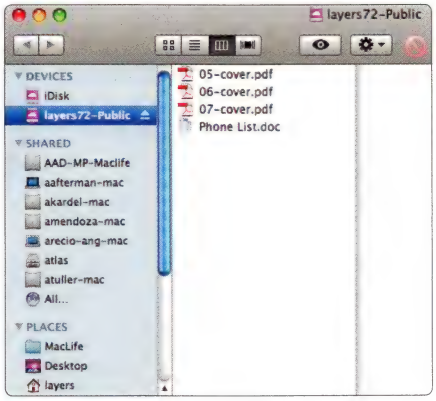


If your needs are as simple as ours, you may just want your home country's 2009 holidays added to iCal. If you live in the U.S., Canada, the UK, Australia, India, Malaysia, Singapore, New Zealand, Hong Kong, or Romania, you can get the iCal subscription you need from www.calendarlabs.com. Apple offers hundreds more free on its site.

SECURELY SHARE FILES VIA YOUR iDISK PUBLIC FOLDER

The beauty of iDisk is that it gives you access to files you may keep on your home Mac from any Web browser at any time you need them. Using the Public folder within iDisk, you can also share these files with others.

Two things to keep in mind when stashing files in iDisk for your own use or to share with others in your Public folder: You're limited to a file size of up to 1GB when uploading via me.com using a browser. To upload a file to iDisk, log in to MobileMe at me.com, click the iDisk icon, then click the Upload icon (an up arrow in a small white circle). To save time, you can also mount iDisk on your Desktop and plop files up to 2GB in size there using the Finder. To do this, open System Preferences > MobileMe and click the iDisk tab. At the bottom of the window, turn iDisk Sync on by clicking Start. This is where you can also set a password and manage user privileges for anyone who goes to your Public folder to view or access files. The URL for your Public folder is public.me.com/yourmobilemeusername. If you set a password, the username is the word *public*.



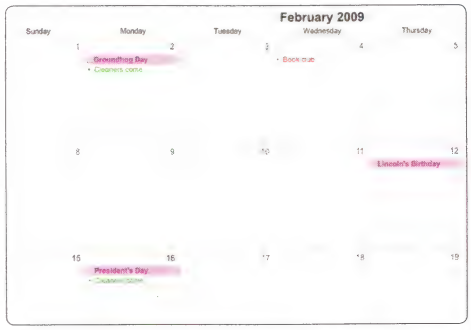
Your file-sharing buddies can add your iDisk Public folder to their Finder.

They can also get to your Public folder from the Finder by choosing Go > iDisk > Other User's Public Folder. In the box that appears, they just type your MobileMe username—and, of course, the password, if you've protected the folder with one.

Now, to put files into your Public folder, open a new Finder window, and drag files from their location on your Mac's hard drive to Public on the name of your mounted iDisk "drive." Voilà—file sharing made relatively simple.

System Preferences > MobileMe > Sync > Sync Now (or click the Sync icon in your taskbar and select SyncNow from the drop-down). You can also let it do its thing on its regular auto-sync schedule. Your newly subscribed calendar data should appear on your calendar in MobileMe, and now, when you go to another Mac and sync it with MobileMe, everything should match.

Finally, you'll want to sync your iPhone or iPod touch devices to MobileMe too. On your iPhone or iPod touch, press the Home button, tap Settings > Mail, Contacts, Calendars > Your MobileMe account. Slide or tap the on/off slider next to calendars to On. You'll see a warning that informs you that your calendar info will be removed from your iPhone. This shouldn't be a problem because it will all reappear after you sync with MobileMe, but if you're unsure, sync your iPhone with your computer in iTunes before completing this step, so you'll have a backup.



Thank goodness we won't miss out on Groundhog Day and Lincoln's Birthday, now that we tricked iCal and MobileMe into syncing an '09 holiday calendar subscription.

Just as we did with the publicly available U.S. holidays calendar, you can follow similar steps to get your Google calendar data synced to MobileMe by exporting it as its own file then importing it back into iCal.

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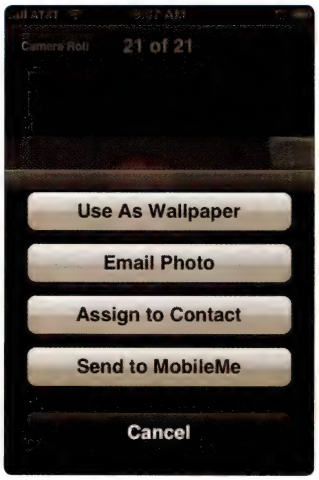
ADD PHOTOS TO MOBILEME GALLERIES FROM YOUR iPHONE OR iPOD TOUCH

The best thing about this is what a time-saver it can be, particularly if friends and family habitually share their photos with you via email. First you need to set up the albums in your MobileMe Gallery to accept new photos from an iPhone. In MobileMe, click on the Gallery icon. If you want to change the settings on an existing album so it will accept photos sent from your iPhone, select the album and click the Settings icon. In the dialog that appears, check "Adding of photos via email or iPhone," then click Publish. Now, when you receive a photo via email, or snap a photo on your iPhone that you want to add to a MobileMe gallery, the option to Send To MobileMe appears among the email options that appear when you tap the Send icon at the bottom of the screen.

Select an album in the Gallery and click the icon that looks like a switch, then check the box that allows you to upload photos via email from your iPhone or iPod touch.



After a photo has been saved to your Camera Roll, adding it to your MobileMe Gallery is a matter of tapping the Send icon at the bottom of the screen, tapping Send To MobileMe, and choosing the album from the resulting list.

ELIMINATE DUPLICATE DOCK ITEMS AND DASHBOARD WIDGETS

When you first set up MobileMe syncing on your primary Mac, if you select the option to sync Dashboard Widgets (System Preferences > MobileMe > Sync), you may experience duplication when you go to use another Mac that is synced with the same MobileMe account—particularly if you had duplicate Dashboard widgets installed on both Macs.

To set things right, set your Dashboard widgets exactly as you want them on one Mac, sync with MobileMe, then, when syncing your other Macs, allow MobileMe to replace the data on that Mac with data from MobileMe.

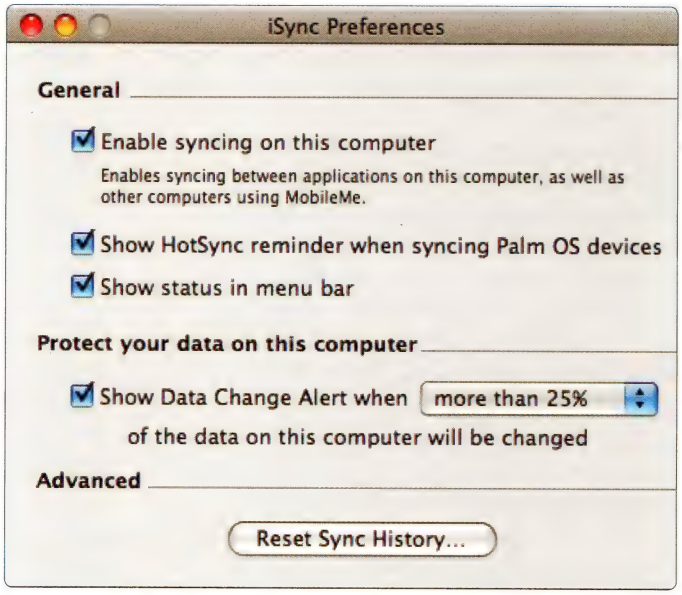
The same concept can be applied to Dock items too. We also love the fact that you can sync System Preferences for each MobileMe account, so when you change prefs on one Mac, they'll apply to your other Macs whenever MobileMe syncs.

The same Dock items on all your Macs—continuity is a beautiful thing.

CHANGE iSYNC PREFS TO MINIMIZE "% CHANGE" POP-UPS

Depending on which Macs (iPhones, iPod touches, etc.) contain most of your contacts before you start using MobileMe regularly, you may encounter messages when MobileMe syncs warning you that "Syncing with MobileMe will change more than 5% of your Contacts"...or calendars or other data. Rather than worry about this or trying to get to the bottom of exactly what the alerts mean, we prefer instead to change iSync preferences so the number of changes has to reach a higher threshold than 5 percent to trigger an alert. Open /Applications/iSync, choose iSync > Preferences (or just type Command-,) then under Protect Your Data On This Computer, click the Show Data Change Alert in the drop-down to the right from 5% to something higher (we chose 25%).

This way, your Mac will only notify you when more than 5 percent of a certain data type will change as a result of MobileMe syncing.



Don't waste your time with inconsequential 5% data-change notifications. Change the percentage in iSync prefs instead.

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– Christopher Breen, Macworld

"WireTap Studio is dead simple to use: select an audio source, record, do any editing and post-production that needs to be done, and then save the file one of a variety of formats."

– Jason Tucker, Blogger & Podcaster Magazine

"The design and feature suite for WTS seem to say "Give me a chance to make it easier to get this right," and that's a big plus in any field of endeavor -- it's a shame they dont make marriage counseling software."

– Michael Rose, The Unofficial Apple Weblog (TUAW)

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– Kirk Hiner, Applelinks.com

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WireTap Studio requires a Mac with an Intel, PowerPC G5, or PowerPC G4 (1GHz or faster) processor and Mac OS X 10.4 or later.
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Case Study: Matthew Carden
Occupation: Photographer
Gear: 15-inch MacBook Pro, 13-inch MacBook, 23-inch Apple Cinema Display, Adobe CS3, Nikon D3 DSLR camera

UP WITH LITTLE PEOPLE

How a commercial photographer fell into an unusual niche, photographing mini model-train figurines in still-life scenes with food, using—what else?—a Mac-based studio setup. BY LESLIE AYERS

Matthew Carden shot the photos for "10 Reasons Your Small Business Should Run on Macs," p30.

We know, there's nothing *that* unusual about a job as a professional photographer, especially among the Mac-using ranks. In Matthew Carden's case, though, he's found an unusual—dare we say "odd"?—photographic niche after many years working as a food and lifestyle photographer for outfits like Williams-Sonoma, Chronicle Books, Taunton Press, and others.

Carden's current focus—building a business photographing miniature model-train people arranged in interesting and surprising ways in still-lifes with food—arose spontaneously several years ago when Carden had the idea to shoot some miniature people "climbing" some homemade marshmallows that his wife Jennifer, a chef, cookbook author, and food stylist, had prepared. "Homemade marshmallows look nothing like the kind you buy in the store," Carden says. In fact, they resemble crumbly white chunks of granite much more than the puffy, squarish cotton balls we're familiar with.

The dimple at the bottom of this Asian pear was the perfect nook for a mini charwoman.

Jennifer got into food styling a little while after graduating from culinary school. "I started shooting a Williams-Sonoma catalog that involved a lot of food," Carden says. "I was paying a food stylist—who didn't know anything about food—a lot of money. At that point my wife was working in a restaurant, but knew she didn't want to own a restaurant. She has an artistic background and I said, 'Look, this food styling thing is what you should be doing.' That spun her into food styling, which spun me into more food photography, and it spiraled from there that the food became a more consistent part of our work."

Carden decided to start doing a series of photos with the mini people to help himself stay on his "creative toes." He saw it as an exercise "to stay in a creative and aware state of mind more often: Don't think about it too much, just react and create."

What drew him to photography in the first place was an interest in creating images that have multiple layers.

"Layers can be ideas or messages behind an image, forms and shapes that create other images, or a play on scale and subject matter—anything that makes people stop and think about a picture."

GIVE HIM A MAC—OR TWO. Like a lot of creative pros, Carden is a Mac user because that was the default platform in his field when he transitioned from film photography to digital. "The interface is easier, the system works better, and the platform is not as fraught with problems as the Windows platform. Of course, there used to be a much bigger divide [between Mac and Windows users]."

Carden tries to avoid buying tech gear just for the sake of owning the newest thing. "I have evolved from massive camera systems that required tricked-out computers and huge monitors to a totally portable and streamlined studio—and I am loving it," he says.

"Today you can really do anything with any system, depending on what you do, but Macs *do* look better. I'm a sucker for innovative industrial design. [The Mac] looks and feels better, period. Everything in my studio is brushed aluminum, so our aluminum MacBooks work very well with that."

Carden's current studio setup consists of a 2-year-old 15-inch MacBook Pro; a brand-new 13-inch MacBook (aluminum unibody); a 23-inch Apple Cinema Display; assorted external drives, scanners, and printers; a USB/FireWire hub; and a Wacom tablet. He connects the Macs via an AirPort Extreme wireless base station.

As for software, Carden is an Adobe Creative Suite 3 user, which he doesn't see changing anytime soon. "I don't use new stuff anymore unless I have to. The learning curve can really kill my creativity and spontaneity," he says.

To keep things as spontaneous as possible, Carden says having a somewhat uniform workflow for every shoot helps keep him focused on the end result. He shoots all his photos in RAW, uploads them to his

Swoosh. Miniature skiers traverse the sprinkle-bedecked "slalems" of a red velvet cake Jennifer Carden baked as part of the Carden family New Year's Eve celebration.

Mac, previews and organizes them using Adobe Bridge, converts the images to TIF and makes initial tweaks in Camera Raw. "Almost all post is done in Photoshop," he adds. "I try to make a point of shooting what I want, but the ability to control everything in Photoshop is amazing. Even when I think an image is shot perfectly, I can usually improve it somehow in Photoshop."

Of course, he adds, he tries to avoid tweaking images to the point of "blatant manipulation." The goal, he says, is simply to arrive at "the best possible version of an image."

LIFE IN MINIATURE. So just how big is Carden's personal collection of mini model-train figures?

"When you look at how many are available, it's not that big," he says. "There are a billion different styles and themes, but there are a lot of weird ones that you wonder why they make for trains, like scuba divers. It never ceases to amaze me how many different kinds there are. Some friends of mine were just in Germany and brought me back a set of nudists, which I'd never seen before. Where is *that* going in your train set?" he wonders, laughing.

Another oddball theme in model-train miniatures is a series of people mooning, Carden says. "There's some subculture down in Los Angeles, who on the same day every year, go out and moon the Amtrak trains. Apparently that was justification enough to come out with a series of people doing that."

So will Carden create a series of food shots for his portfolio featuring the miniature mooners?

"Stuff like that I almost don't even know where to go with because it's so weird and random that I don't know if people would understand what was going on," he says.

He's toyed with the idea of contacting the companies that make the mini figures, to let them know that he's using their products in ways they probably never imagined.

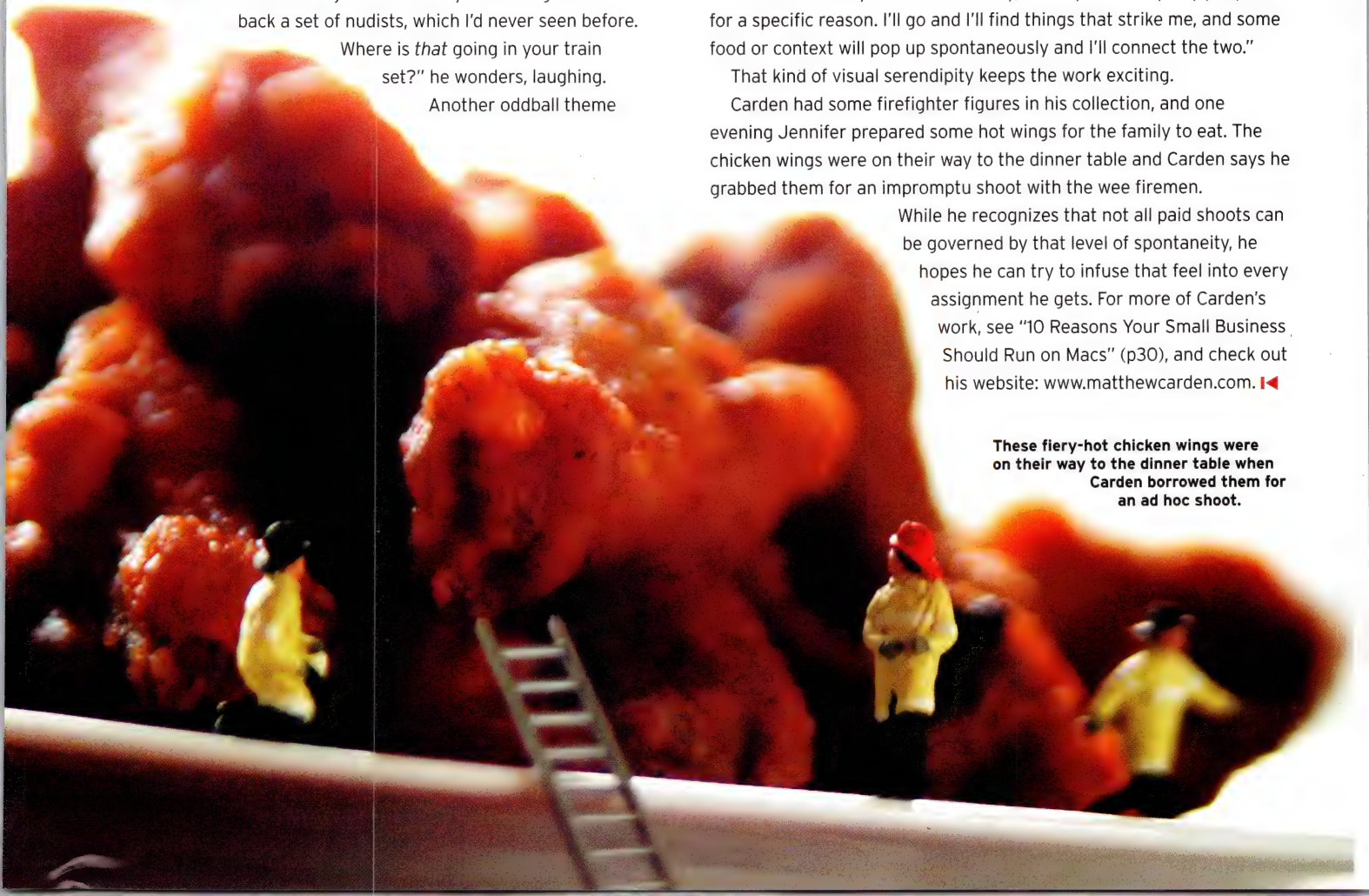
The potential to grow his collection of little people is almost endless, he says, but it will depend on whether he can carve out his niche as a photographer who works with the tiny figures.

"There are always more I could buy," he says. "I rarely buy people for a specific reason. I'll go and I'll find things that strike me, and some food or context will pop up spontaneously and I'll connect the two."

That kind of visual serendipity keeps the work exciting.

Carden had some firefighter figures in his collection, and one evening Jennifer prepared some hot wings for the family to eat. The chicken wings were on their way to the dinner table and Carden says he grabbed them for an impromptu shoot with the wee firemen.

While he recognizes that not all paid shoots can be governed by that level of spontaneity, he hopes he can try to infuse that feel into every assignment he gets. For more of Carden's work, see "10 Reasons Your Small Business Should Run on Macs" (p30), and check out his website: www.matthewcarden.com.



These fiery-hot chicken wings were on their way to the dinner table when Carden borrowed them for an ad hoc shoot.

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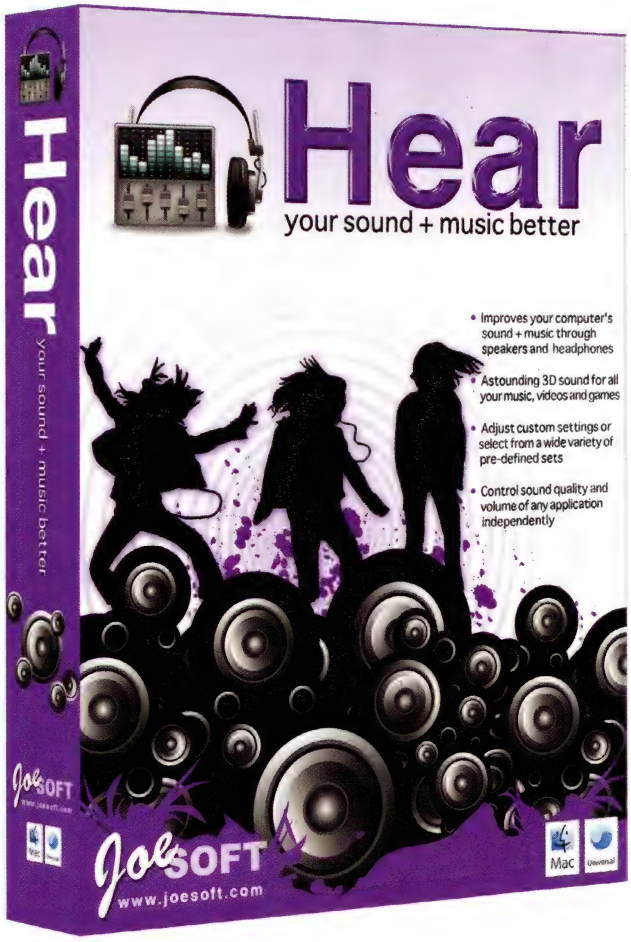

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>>> Reviews

TOUGH TESTING, TRUSTED RATINGS

The current of the future: wind power at your fingertips.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARK MADEO

MINIWIZ HYMINI

HARNESS THE ELEMENTS

A power station for your Apple gadgets that fits in the palm of your hand.

The HYmini leverages the power of the wind, sun, hand-crank, or, if need be, the electric grid to recharge most of your 5V gadgets. Rain or shine, this charger will store the power it generates in its internal 1200mAh lithium-ion battery, and a fully charged HYmini can juice up a couple of iPods before it runs dry.

The good news for Seattleites and Londoners: You can stick the HYmini where the sun don't shine—that is, somewhere it can harness the wind—and 20 minutes of wind charge should get you 30 minutes of playback time on your iPod. The bad news: The wind generator, which is designed as a supplemental source and cannot fully charge the HYmini on its own, requires consistent wind speeds of at least 9mph, a feat only feasible if you attach it to your bike or car (note, however, that the device maxes out at 40mph and will not withstand wind speeds in excess of 60mph, eliminating freeway driving as a viable option). So, while the wind here in San Francisco averages 10.67mph, the device can really only take advantage of these breezes if it is sitting on a cyclist's handlebars or is attached to a car window during in-town driving.

We attached the HYmini to our bike and rode for 2 hours at around 20 mph, from which we got about an hour and a half of play out of our iPod touch. And while our bike commute is only a half an hour, luckily, you can use partial charges to keep your devices going indefinitely. Ultimately though, we wish the wind turbine was more efficient.

The HYmini is also designed to work with solar panels from MiniWIZ ($24.99), which take about 10 hours of direct sunlight to fully charge the device. We tried the panels—built from renewable resources—in our office's tinted windows to no avail, and then tried to charge the HYmini with the solar panels stuck in our regular windows at home with some success, but made the most progress when we caught direct rays on our sun deck. We had a few extra solar panels, which were able to give us a nearly full charge in just a few hours when piggybacked together. The HYmini can also be charged with the included AC adapter and then topped off via solar or wind power—convenient for traveling.

The bottom line. This mini windmill and solar charger fits in your pocket and can keep you tuned in without plugging in. And while we love that this futuristic charger puts alternative power at our fingertips, we wish it was a tad more efficient at harnessing the elements and—at the very least—contained a battery-charge indicator to let us know how much juice we had left. —*Jan Hughes*

HYMINI

MiniWIZ Sustainable Energy Development
www.hymini.com
Price: $49.99 for basic package; $25 for solar panel; $8.99 for bike mount; $14.99 for armband; $9.99 for hand-crank
Requirements: 5V handheld devices in need of a charge

+ Generates eco-friendly power. Multiple methods for charging. Lightweight and portable.

− No charge-level indicator. Wind power can't fully charge the HYmini. Need consistent 9mph winds to charge wind turbine. Solar panels, hand-crank, and holder adaptors for arm, bike, and car to facilitate wind-charging cost extra. Will not charge with standard iPod/iPhone charge cables. Built-in battery not user-replaceable.

Mac|Life RATED SOLID

A bit more brawn, still bulk-free.

The ScanSnap S510M packs double the power of its super-portable cousin the S300M – and is still smaller than a letter-sized piece of paper. Scans 18 double-sided pages per minute. Comes with Adobe Acrobat® 8.0 Professional (a $449 value). **www.fcpa.fujitsu.com/maclife or call 1-888-425-8228.**

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A chill-pill for your laptop.

CHOIIX AIR-THROUGH

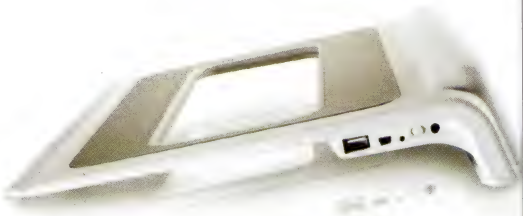
AIR APPARENT

We all bond with our Macs in one way or another, but relationships with notebook computers can be a little more intimate than those with other machines. Notebooks are getting more powerful—and running hotter—every year. Power is good for getting work done, but not so good for the heat-sensitive internal components of our computers—not to mention our laps. The Choiix Air-Through is a notebook stand and USB 2.0 hub that circulates air beneath your MacBook with a pair of ultraquiet fans. It packs some handy features into a convenient, though cheaply constructed, package.

At 14 inches wide by 13 inches deep, the Air-Through lifts any notebook 2 inches off your desk or lap, but it's really sized for something no wider than a MacBook or MacBook Air. The included mini-USB-to-USB cable is just long enough to plug into the left side of the Air-Through and reach a MacBook's USB port; it's also the only way to power the Air-Through's fans and hub. There's a port for some kind of power jack next to the button that controls the fans (they're either on or off), but no power adapter is included, and the scant instructions give no hint of the proper voltage. It's an odd omission, but USB-only power means the Air-Through can travel easily with you around the office. Fortunately, the Air-Through sports four full-size USB ports: one on the right and three on the left.

Less fortunately, the build quality of our Air-Through seems a little shoddy. The rubber on the bottom of our test unit could be pulled away from the plastic body pretty easily, and some seams had gaps and irregular edges. However, the Air-Through is more than sturdy enough to support a computer, and its rear riser is a wide, flat foot that's easy to balance on your legs. The aluminum plate set into the top of the Air-Through looks good and absorbs some heat, but it's a little slicker than we'd like. It's fine on a desk, but a notebook tends to slide around just a bit when the Air-Through is resting on a lap. Speaking of looks, white plastic and aluminum is *so* last year: The Air-Through doesn't go with a newer MacBook's design. But will it cool? While the Air-Through's elevating action and fans certainly help keep laps temperate, it only lowered our MacBook's internal temperature by a couple degrees under heavy use.

The bottom line. The Air-Through doesn't exactly impress, but it solves the problem of too-toasty thighs and too-few USB ports adequately.—*Adam Berenstain*



AIR-THROUGH

Choiix
www.choiix.com
Price: $44.99
Requirements: MacBook, MacBook Air, or ultraportable notebook; USB port

\+ Quiet fans keep your lap cool. Provides a four-port USB hub.

− Construction quality is so-so. Surface could be tackier to keep a computer in place. Doesn't match Apple's latest MacBooks.

Mac|Life RATED SOLID

The bulk-free scanner to de-bulk your life.

Meet the world's smallest color duplex scanner designed just for the Mac.

With a footprint that's half the size of a sheet of paper, the Fujitsu ScanSnap S300M will cut your workload—and your desktop clutter—down to size. The ScanSnap S300M has an automatic document feeder that holds up to 10 pages and scans both sides of everything from business cards to legal-size documents at a rate of up to 8 pages per minute. Now you can convert stacks of paperwork from receipts, recipes, even a budding artist's masterpiece, into PDFs with the touch of a button. And the ScanSnap S300M is Leopard compatible, with a choice of AC adapter or portable USB power so you can stay organized no matter where life takes you. **Tell us how you'll ScanSnap. You just might win a $100 American Express gift check. Visit us at http://us.fujitsu.com/scanners/maclife or call 1-888-425-8228.**

ScanSnap S510M

ScanSnap S300M • AC adapter and USB power settings • Scans paper sizes from 2 x 2 inches up to legal length • Automatic document feeder holds up to 10 pages • One-button scanning to PDF and JPEG • Scans at speeds up to 8 pages per minute • Automatic color, de-skew, orientation and blank page removal • Bundled with Cardiris™ business card software • Includes Leopard compatibility • Duplex color up to 600 dpi • Less than 3.1 lbs. • Only $295

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CDW MacConnection MacMall Insight

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ART LEBEDEV STUDIO OPTIMUS MAXIMUS

CUSTOM KEYS SHIFT YOUR VIEWPOINT

"Optimus Maximus" fittingly sounds like a cross between a Transformer and an emotional plateau of Roman excess. Easily the most expensive keyboard we've ever reviewed—and one of the most interesting—each blank key houses a 48-by-48 pixel OLED display instead of permanent markings. Hit Shift, and lower-case letters stand tall, while the number row turns into simple punctuation.

But the chameleon keyboard can morph even more, displaying customizable languages and icons to match menu commands or macros. It can even present a range of live data, such as the time or CPU load. And while we wanted even more ways for the Mac to utilize the keys—iChat notifications, for example—we were most disappointed by the keyboard's physical action. Each press requires significantly more force than our range of regular input devices, and a slightly larger key shape takes some getting used to.

With its slightly oversize keys and full extra columns on the left, we had to clear a lot of desk space for the keyboard. It connects via USB 2.0 and feeds two extra devices with a built-in hub. Additionally, it requires a provided power connection. We installed the basic software, which, oddly, runs as two applications instead of a tab within System Preferences. But other than cluttering up the Dock, configuration was straightforward.

The Optimus website offers several downloadable keyboard presets that we imported: Aperture, Finder, iCal, iTunes, Mail, and Safari—all of which worked well. In Mail, after holding Command, the numbers 1 through 8 changed into icons to move to the Inbox, Drafts, Trash, and other points of navigation. The apostrophe turned into an icon to increase the quote level, and when we held down Command-Option, it turned into a decrease icon. Icons were crisp and clearly showed what would happen. We enjoyed the direct feedback, learning these standard commands from the keyboard instead of having to memorize them from onscreen menus or a printed manual.

The configuration software also creates layouts for other applications. The process is intuitive, although could be improved with shorter menus; you click a key and then scroll through a few lists to set the image and function. And instead of just displaying your own icons or its 30 options, a key can show animation, a clock, or the current sound volume. We especially liked using the keys to read information from the Mac. We set one to display the processor temperature, another to show the length of time the Mac has been running, and a third to present network speed.

And while the best options display live data—the keyboard can pull information from Gmail or your Google Calendar—there are only a few. There's no RSS, no way to display the new message count from Mail, and the keyboard can't dynamically show icons of the running applications. With such an open, configurable design, we wanted more information literally at our fingertips.

But worst of all for heavy typists—versus graphic designers—the keyboard never felt comfortable. We've never experienced repetitive stress injury using standard keyboards, but testing the Optimus Maximus actually caused our hands

to ache. It takes a lot of pressure to press keys, and we'd never consider it for a primary typing device. We eventually got used to the oversized keys, but the size difference caused quite a few missed keystrokes.

The bottom line. The Optimus Maximus's in-key displays offer an exciting, innovative interface. But too-heavy key action kills its futuristic versatility. It's uncomfortable for plain-old typing.—*Zack Stern*

Who are you calling a dingbat? In-key displays look great in any light.

OPTIMUS MAXIMUS

Art. Lebedev Studio
www.artlebedev.com
Price: $1,578.92
Requirements: Mac OS 10.5.1 or later

+ Changing key icons show functions in many situations. Includes several application-specific layouts and complete manual configuration. Some on-key feedback shows information from your Mac.

− Pricey. Takes heavy pressure to activate keys, causing RSI concern. No company-provided sets for Photoshop, Final Cut Pro, iPhoto, Firefox, iMovie, or other Mac apps. Not enough variety in live, on-key data. Letter keys are slightly larger than normal.

Mac|Life RATED SOLID

CANON SELPHY CP760

YOUR OWN PRIVATE FOTOMAT

Yes, it's compact, but the 4x6 paper tray juts out from the front a somewhat inelegantly, expanding the Selphy CP760's physical footprint by about 20 percent.

Feeling the budget pinch in the downturn? Shopping for a photo printer needn't cause undue strain on your wallet. Take Canon's Selphy CP760, a compact photo printer that retails for $99.95 but can be had for a street price of about $50 after mail-in rebates, online discounts, and so on. And while you *are* limited in the size of the photos you can print with the CP760 (specifically 4 inches by 6 inches), this small-fry printer offers a lot of flexibility that larger-format printers don't, namely its portability and comparatively small footprint (just 7.9 by 3.3 by 5.6 inches—about the size of half a loaf of bread).

What's more, you don't even need a computer to print your digital snapshots on the CP760. Since the printer accepts a wide range of flash memory cards—from xD to SD to SDHC to most flavors of Memory Stick to Compact Flash, as well as a direct-to-camera connection—you can shoot at will then print your photos on demand.

The CP760's small size requires a few trade-offs, the most cumbersome of which is the dye-sublimation technology the unit uses to transfer ink to paper. The dye-sub print process requires the paper to make three passes through the printer: one for yellow, one for magenta, one for cyan (blue), and a final pass for a clear coat. This requires an additional 6 inches of clearance behind the printer, in addition to the 7.5 inches that the 4x6 paper cassette adds to the front. While we expected the multipass process to take longer than average to print a 4x6 photo, we actually found that wasn't the case. Although Canon claims that prints on the CP760 take "an average of 52 seconds," our 300dpi photos printed in 1 minute, 14 seconds each—half the time it took to print a high-resolution 4x6 on the HP Photosmart D5460 (4 out of 5 stars, Nov/08, p58). The problem with this back and forth is not that it takes longer than the manufacturer claims, but that it seemed to predispose the CP760 to frequent "paper jams." Luckily though, the paper did not actually jam inside the printer; it just gave the printer the *idea* that it was jammed, causing an error message to flash on the unit's 2.5-inch TFT display. In a frustrating human vs. technology showdown, we followed the prompt to clear the jam by turning the unit off then on again—to no avail. After a few minutes, the "error" finally cleared, but only after we removed our SD card, turned the unit off and started from scratch.

While it's easy enough to bypass your Mac altogether and print photos straight from a memory card or camera, Canon provides a disc with printing software that, when installed, makes it a bit easier to view your pictures before printing. We preferred opening our photos in Photoshop on our Mac, editing as desired, cropping them to exactly 4 by 6 inches, and printing from there. The CP760 offers onboard red-eye reduction, but not much else in the way of image editing.

As far as print quality, we were satisfied but not blown away. Still, the value in the CP760 is readily apparent when you add up the cost of the printer and supplies. If you pay the $50 street price for the printer, then buy a 108-sheet 4x6 postcard paper-and-ink pack for $29.99, you can print your first 100-plus photos for 74 cents each. After that, your prints cost a mere 28 cents each—as cheap as or cheaper than online printing services, and you get instant gratification.

The bottom line. The Selphy CP760 lets you abandon photo-printing services and print all of your personal snapshots yourself.
—Leslie Ayers

SELPHY CP760

Canon
usa.canon.com
Price: $99.99
Requirements: Digital camera with removable media card, Mac OS 10.28 or higher (to print from a Mac)

+ Portable. Fast. Produces good-looking prints. Solid value. Great for home or mobile use.

− Frequent phantom "paper jams." Annoying tear-off tabs on 4x6 postcard paper.

Mac|Life RATED SOLID

> INCASE POWER SLIDER
> 3GJUICE
> MOPHIE JUICE PACK 3G

GIVE YOUR iPHONE A POWER BOOST

Considering the iPhone's size and everything it can do, it's not surprising that battery life isn't one of its strong points. The iPhone can help you find your way, watch movies, check your email, keep calendars, play games—oh, and it makes calls too. The one thing it doesn't have is enough juice to last more than a day. For road-warriors who are away from home for large stretches of time, or for game and movie addicts, an external battery is an essential accessory.—*Ray Aguilera*

POWER SLIDER

Incase's Power Slider combines a protective hard case with a 1330mAh battery for your iPhone 3G. It charges via the included USB cable and syncs to iTunes while in the case. The two-piece case slides on and covers the entire back of the phone, as well as all the edges. Cutouts leave all of the buttons easily accessible. While we like the two-in-one design, the trade-off is a case that can feel bulky at times, although it only adds 2.5 ounces to the weight of your iPhone. The Power Slider gives users five hours of additional 3G talk-time and seven hours of video playback.

POWER SLIDER

Incase
www.goincase.com
Price: $99.95
Requirements: iPhone 3G

+ Battery integrated into full protective case. Allows iTunes syncing. LED power gauge.

− Can feel a bit bulky in your pocket.

Mac|Life RATED GREAT

3GJUICE

3GJuice takes a different approach to external power. Rather than a case-style battery, 3GJuice is a square dongle that attaches via a dock connector. It's less convenient to use—making the iPhone somewhat awkward to carry and use while plugged in—but on the plus side, the 1800mAh 3GJuice will probably work with your existing case, not to mention any other iPhones or iPods you already have. The compact battery sports a green LED to indicate that it's charging, but there's no way to tell how much power the 3GJuice has left. As one of the most compact external batteries we've seen, its size makes this battery an appealing option for travelers or users who don't want a battery integrated into a case.

3GJUICE

3GJuice
www.3gjuice.com
Price: $53.95
Requirements: iPhone or dockable iPod

+ Dongle-style battery works with iPods or iPhones. Compact.

− Makes the iPhone awkward to use while charging. No way to gauge remaining power.

Mac|Life RATED SOLID

JUICE PACK 3G

The Juice Pack 3G fits your iPhone like a glove, covering the edges on the bottom half of the phone, while the top remains exposed. Fans of minimalist cases—or no cases at all—will appreciate the Juice Pack's relatively slim profile. There's also a Juice Pack to fit the original iPhone, but the 3G version forgoes the backwards dock connector of its predecessor in favor of a standard mini-USB jack with included cable for charging. Juice Pack 3G doubles your battery life with up to six hours additional talk time on a 3G network, or eight hours of video playback in a 3-ounce, 1800mAh package. It also allows for iTunes syncing while the phone is in the case.

JUICE PACK 3G

Mophie
www.mophie.com
Price: $99.95
Requirements: iPhone 3G

+ Adds a pleasing heft to the iPhone 3G. Allows iTunes syncing. LED power gauge.

− Doesn't fully protect iPhone.

Mac|Life RATED GREAT

CHROME SOMA

BUCKLE UP!

You've gotta carry your laptop in something. But—let's face it—there are a lot of ugly laptop bags out there. If you're looking for something with a little more style, options can be limited. Then there's the question of function. Plenty of briefcase-style bags offer loads of storage capacity for cables, peripherals, and other gear you need to get work done, but anyone who's tried to lug around 15 pounds of gear in a poorly designed bag with a skimpy shoulder strap quickly learns how much thoughtful design counts when it comes to bags. For computer-toting road warriors, Chrome's single-strap Soma bag succeeds where many other bags fall short. While the two-tone color scheme is not the grooviest we've ever seen, Chrome's street style is evident, and the bag is easy and comfortable to carry, even when loaded up with our MacBook and a ton of extras.

The first thing we noticed about Soma was Chrome's signature seat belt–buckle closure. Inserting the tab into the buckle makes a satisfying metallic click, a sound familiar to anyone who's ever ridden in the backseat of a large American station wagon. The buckle closure makes for quick on-and-off, but the buckle can be somewhat cumbersome because of its heft. If you're used to just tossing your bag down at home, be warned that doing so with the Soma can result in divots in wood floors and angry looks from significant others.

Inside, the Soma features a padded compartment for your laptop, along with an open compartment with several pockets. Your laptop fits in vertically, and the bag will fit up to a 15-inch MacBook Pro. There are pockets of varying sizes, although most are fairly shallow. A single pocket on the wall of the bag offers a zipper closure. Overall, the bag offers plenty of storage for everyday use, and we were even able to pack for an overnight trip—laptop included—with the Soma.

The Soma closes via a large flap over the top, fastened with plastic buckles. The strap is worn across your chest, messenger-style. It is easy to adjust while you're wearing the bag, which is useful for making quick getaways—or in our case, sprinting after a bus. The Soma also features a small second chest strap to stabilize the bag when riding a bike, but we didn't use it, and unfortunately it is permanently attached to the bag. The carry handle, on the other hand, proved quite useful.

The bottom line. The Soma is comfortable to wear, and slicker than a lot of other laptop bags.—*Ray Aguilera*

The heavy 1970s seat belt buckle can also be used to knock out muggers.

SOMA

Chrome
www.chromebags.com
Price: $140
Requirements: Fits up to 15-inch MacBook Pro

\+ Wide strap is comfortable for prolonged use. Seat belt-style buckle looks cool and is easy to use.

− Only one large zippered pocket inside. No key loop. Small stabilizer strap isn't detachable.

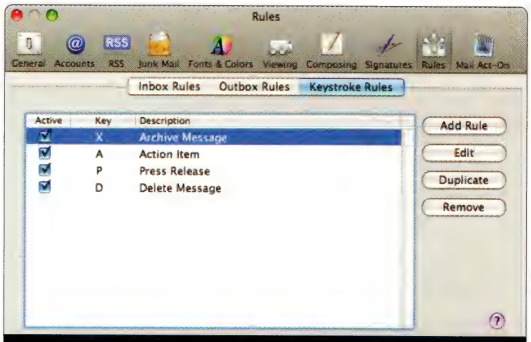
Mac|Life RATED GREAT

INDEV SOFTWARE MAIL ACT-ON 2

MASTER YOUR MAILBOXES

Apple Mail gets the job done, but there are a few crucial features missing. Rules can sort messages as they arrive, but Mail doesn't offer much to help you organize messages after the fact. Indev Software's Mail Act-On is a hugely useful Mail plug-in to do just that and much more. Using rules and user-configurable keystrokes, Mail Act-On can easily tame even the most unruly inbox. And compatibility with Indev's MailTags (4 Stars, Sept/08, p62) turns Mail Act-On into an organizational powerhouse.

At its core, Mail Act-On is a keyboard-based front end for Mail rules. Act-On will allow you to invoke rules on the fly via a pop-up menu or with a custom keystroke. After installing the plug-in, your Rules pane in Mail Preferences will sport three tabs. Inbox Rules will show all your standard Mail rules. Outbox Rules will show rules for sent messages—handy for separating your outgoing personal messages from work-related ones or keeping related messages together. Keystroke Rules (our favorite feature) are rules that you have designated to run when you use a custom keystroke. We found them most useful as a method for quickly filing messages into the appropriate mailbox.



For Mail power users, Act-On is a must-have. Go. Download. Now.

Even with our relatively flat structure of only a few mailboxes, being able to easily separate out the actionable emails from the press releases and interoffice messages without leaving the keyboard allows us to whizz through our overstuffed inbox. Act-On makes it easy to navigate mail. Hitting F1 activates the plug-in's floating window, where you can apply rules, move or copy messages, or navigate to specific mailboxes. The window also searches as you type, making navigating complicated mailbox structures or lengthy rule lists incredibly easy.

The bottom line. Mail Act-On fills in crucial gaps in Mail's feature set, making it a must-have plug-in for anyone who deals with copious emails.—*Ray Aguilera*

Mac|Life Editors' Choice

MAIL ACT-ON 2

Indev Software
www.indev.ca
Price: $24.95
Requirements: OS 10.5

+ Speeds up message sorting for heavy email users. So useful, it's tragic that Apple doesn't bake this functionality into Mail.

− Nothing, really.

Mac|Life RATED AWESOME

Needs NoteBook. Has NoteBook.

Stickies, scraps of paper, web clippings, meeting notes, reminders — take control of it all with Circus Ponies NoteBook, the award-winning application for managing information. Get organized using a familiar notebook interface, with pages and tabs, sections and subsections. "Clip" web research, e-mails and other content to your Notebooks for later reference. Create voice-annotated notes and review them from your computer or iPod. Diagram and sketch when words won't suffice. Find anything instantly using NoteBook's patented Multidex™. Share your Notebooks as PDFs or as websites. And much more. NoteBook has everything you need to get organized.

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www.circusponies.com/trialmaclife

CIRCUS PONIES™

NoteBook

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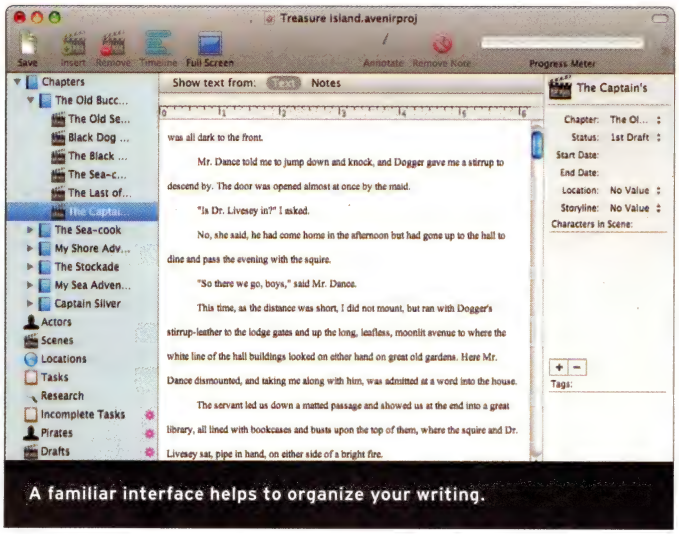
MARINER SOFTWARE STORYMILL 3.2.1

CHANNEL YOUR INNER FITZGERALD

Plenty of people entertain fantasies about writing the Great American Novel. The number of people who actually get that novel written—great or otherwise—is much, much less. Besides the talent, creativity, and motivation to keep it up for thousands and thousands of words, not having the right tools on hand can hamper the endeavor. No doubt you've already got a word processor on your Mac, but a specialized app for novel writing can offer features that regular word processors can't match. And while those extra features alone won't make a novel magically appear on your screen, having the right tool for the job makes the process of extended writing projects a lot easier, not to mention better organized.

Mariner's StoryMill presents a paned, iTunes-style interface that will be instantly familiar to every Mac user. The far left contains your sources, organized into different groupings. You can use the hierarchical Source listing to jump to specific Chapters or Scenes—StoryMill's most basic building blocks. You can also use this list to rearrange scenes or entire chapters within your text. Additionally, you can skip to notes you've entered on specific Actors (characters) or Locations, in addition to details for tracking submissions, research, and to-do items.



A familiar interface helps to organize your writing.

The center section is where you get down to business and actually write your text. The bottom of the text area features live word and character counts, which are great for anyone trying to meet specific targets. Our favorite feature is a built-in counter that tracks words, pages, or total minutes written, which can be a great motivator for lazy writers. And if you're easily distracted, full-screen mode is perfect for blocking out everything but your clever inscriptions.

The right section of the StoryMill interface contains metadata about all of your various Scenes, Chapters, and other text and notes in your project. The tagging feature is useful for assigning arbitrary tags to bits of text, and when coupled with the Smart Views feature—like a Smart Playlist in iTunes—they can help you drill down and find exactly what you are looking for in a lengthy text. And since individual scenes can be assigned to specific times, a Timeline overview can help you see how your story is progressing, even if the storylines aren't revealed in a linear fashion.

StoryMill can output to your text easily into Word and various plain-text formats, although we were a little put off by the fact that the app stores your text essentially in a database, making it hard to just open your project file in a text editor if something were to go sideways with StoryMill itself—although frequent manual plain-text exports can alleviate that problem. And we missed a versioning system for keeping multiple edits of a Scene or Chapter. But the database-like features for tracking Actors, Locations, and other data about your writing is amazingly helpful for managing the details of lengthy projects.

The bottom line. StoryMill offers essential organizational features for long-form writers that word processors miss.—*Ray Aguilera*

STORYMILL 3.2.1

Mariner Software
www.marinersoftware.com
Price: $49.95 boxed; $44.95 download; $14.95 upgrade
Requirements: Mac OS 10.4 or later

+ Familiar interface. Easy rearrangement of scenes and chapters. Tagging and metadata options make it easy to manage large writing projects. Live word count. Can auto-save to MobileMe. Universal binary.

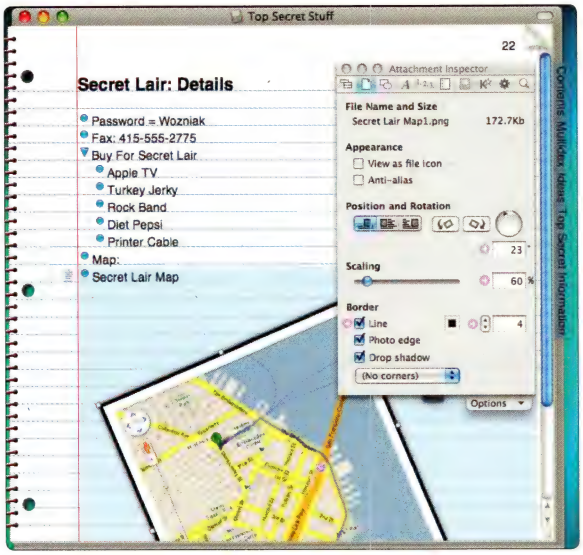
− Data stored in a difficult-to-access format. No mechanism for multiple versions of Scenes or Chapters.

Mac|Life RATED GREAT

CIRCUS PONIES NOTEBOOK 3

ORGANIZATION GEEKS, TAKE NOTE

Circus Ponies' newest version of NoteBook takes everything we loved about the last version (4 out of 5 stars, Oct/07, p60) and adds several new features that might be just the thing to convince Mac users drowning in data to give NoteBook a spin. True to its namesake, you can organize notes, to-dos, outlines, pictures, audio files, Web clips, and just about anything else on your computer in a familiar notebook-style interface. For super-organized types, NoteBook may very well be the greatest thing since the sticky-note, but it's also easy for compulsive fiddlers to get bogged down in all the options, spending more time messing around with NoteBook than actually getting anything accomplished.



Organize all your digital bits and pieces with NoteBook.

At first glance, NoteBook seems simple—almost too simple. When creating a new document—a notebook, natch—you're presented with the familiar sight of a blank page in a spiral-bound book. You can use the page to hold practically anything. You could of course just start typing in data—class or meeting notes, or ideas for your blog, for example. But the real power of NoteBook comes when you start using it to organize different types of data. Over the holiday season, we used NoteBook to organize our shopping lists. We were able to drag and drop in images, and collect Web links, and product reviews to help us as we checked off items from our gift list. Getting text into NoteBook is quick and easy, either via cut and paste, or by using the handy Clipping Service feature, which allows you to quickly grab information from a Safari window and add it to a notebook page. Unfortunately, however, the feature relies on OS X's Services, so it doesn't work with Firefox, our preferred browser. Everything you add to your notebook is instantly indexed and searchable, and you can add a wide variety of metadata to items via the improved Inspector for more flexible searching.

The latest version of NoteBook offers several useful new features. Using OS X's InkWell handwriting recognition, tablet users can just write in their notebook pages, and the text will be searchable within NoteBook. Sketching options are also now available, making NoteBook a handy repository for designers. In keeping with the notebook metaphor, you can also now add sticky notes and flags to notebook pages. Our favorite new feature is the new tear-out pages. Instead of flipping back and forth between several pages within a notebook, you can temporarily "tear out" additional pages so that you can view pages side-by-side.

We were impressed with the flexibility of NoteBook, although its open-ended design can be intimidating for users who need a bit more structure to help them organize. Easy exporting options as plain-text, PDF, or even webpages makes your NoteBook data extremely portable, but as we worked with the app, we wished it offered some sort of native syncing capabilities to keep notebooks current across two or more Macs.

The bottom line. NoteBook can help organize digital details of all kinds, without forcing you to follow a prescribed structure.

—Ray Aguilera

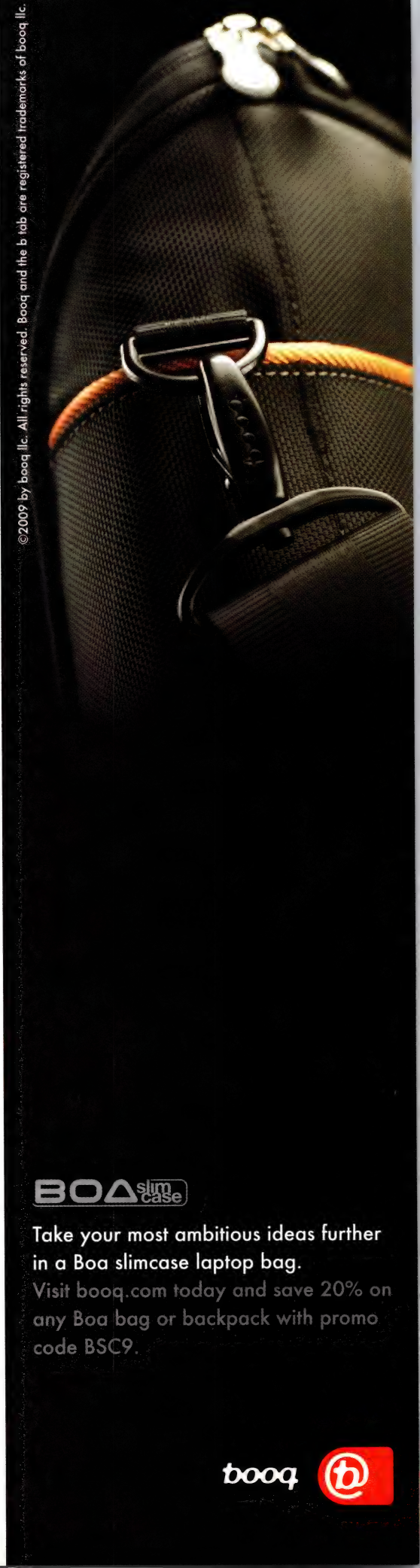
NOTEBOOK 3

Circus Ponies
www.circusponies.com
Price: $49.95 single user; $19.95 upgrade
Requirements: OS 10.4.11 or later; G3, G4, or Intel processor

➕ Organizes many different types of data. Handwriting recognition. Easy export options for data portability.

➖ Open-ended design may work against some users. No native syncing ability. Clippings feature doesn't work with some browsers.

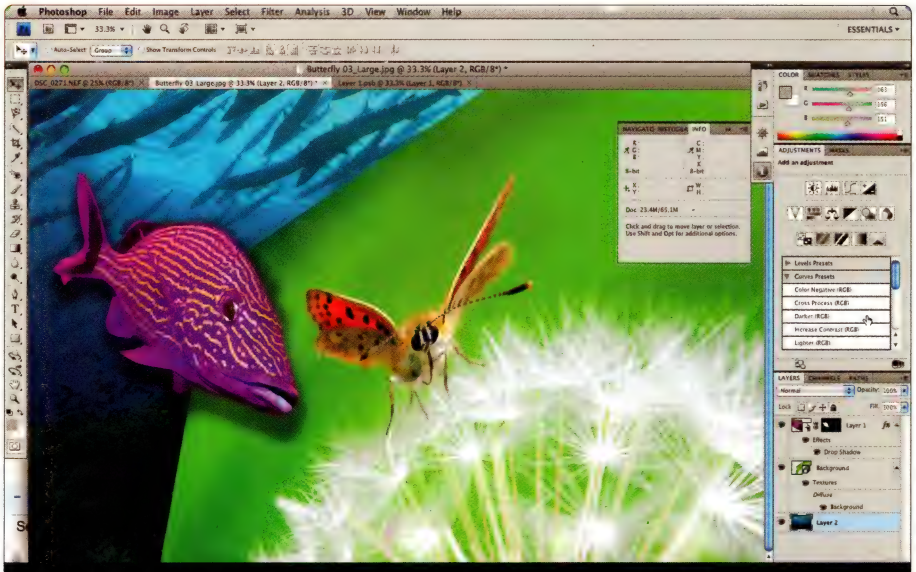
Mac|Life RATED GREAT



ADOBE PHOTOSHOP CS4

PHOTOSHOP KEEPS THE CROWN

Photoshop is the Big Kahuna of image editing, and while other companies have tried to cook up viable competitors, no one has been able to unseat the industry-leading application. CS4 is an update that offers some nifty new additions, but many might find the upgrade decision to be a little less than straightforward.



While the 3D Postcard feature adds new dimensions to layers, is it worth $349 to upgrade?

The very first thing you'll notice in Photoshop CS4 is the revised window interface, which much more closely mirrors the Windows way—a single floating application window with tabs for open documents. While Mac users might initially balk at this new reality, we found it hard to go back to the old way after just a few weeks of using CS4, and it's especially convenient if you tend to keep multiple documents open at a time. Along these same lines, the nonmodal color corrections and masking palettes are a wonderful improvement—if you want to use the Curves control, you simply choose it and drag the controls in the miniature Curves dialog in the color-correction palette. It's a subtle improvement, but a long overdue one. On the other hand, the new nondestructive Layer Masks are a huge plus, as they let you change the softness, size, and transparency of layer masks without affecting the original, sharp mask. Users of Photoshop's Smart Objects will appreciate that they can now have layer masks, and Smart Objects are editable with all of the Transform tools, including Distort, Skew, Perspective, and Scale.

For photographers, there are some very cool new tools and tweaks, starting with Context-Sensitive Scaling, which automatically stretches less-detailed background areas—think sky, grass, or water—while maintaining the size of foreground elements (people, faces, cars). It's a really handy tool when you have to stretch images to fit existing placeholders on a page, a common issue in production-oriented page layout. If you've ever been distressed over some of the heavy-handed results of excessive Dodge and Burning, this tool is now much smarter, applying its area-specific lightening and darkening in a much more controlled fashion. Camera Raw now contains the trés cool nondestructive exposure and color-correction brushes and gradient tool from Lightroom, which is a great thing, but we'd be even happier to see this tools inside Photoshop proper.

Photoshop CS4 Extended has a new 3D menu, which opens up the app to true 3D image manipulation, including mapping images onto 3D objects, distorting them on 3D surfaces, painting on 3D objects, and nice final rendering quality. That said, anyone interested in doing real 3D work is already using a dedicated modeling, rendering, and animation program, and that crowd is going to be underwhelmed by the built-in 3D tools in CS4 Extended.

So now let's get to the big negatives: Photoshop CS4 is not a 64-bit application, an issue for those working with huge files—and lots of RAM. Given that the Windows version is 64-bit, we're less than thrilled. And then there's the issue of upgrade pricing—$349 to upgrade from CS3 Extended is simply too much money; in fact, the $199 upgrade price strikes us as a bit steep for the average Photoshop user. The way the current pricing scheme works, Adobe makes it almost impossible not to spring for the entire CS4 suite, which gets expensive quickly.

The bottom line. Photoshop CS4 is a strong revision—there's a lot to like, which is why it earns our Editor's Choice designation. We suspect that many serious Photoshoppers will spring for the upgrade, but we also hope Adobe takes a closer look at how much it charges for upgrades in the future. They don't call us starving artists for nothing, folks.—*David Biedny*

Mac|Life Editors' Choice

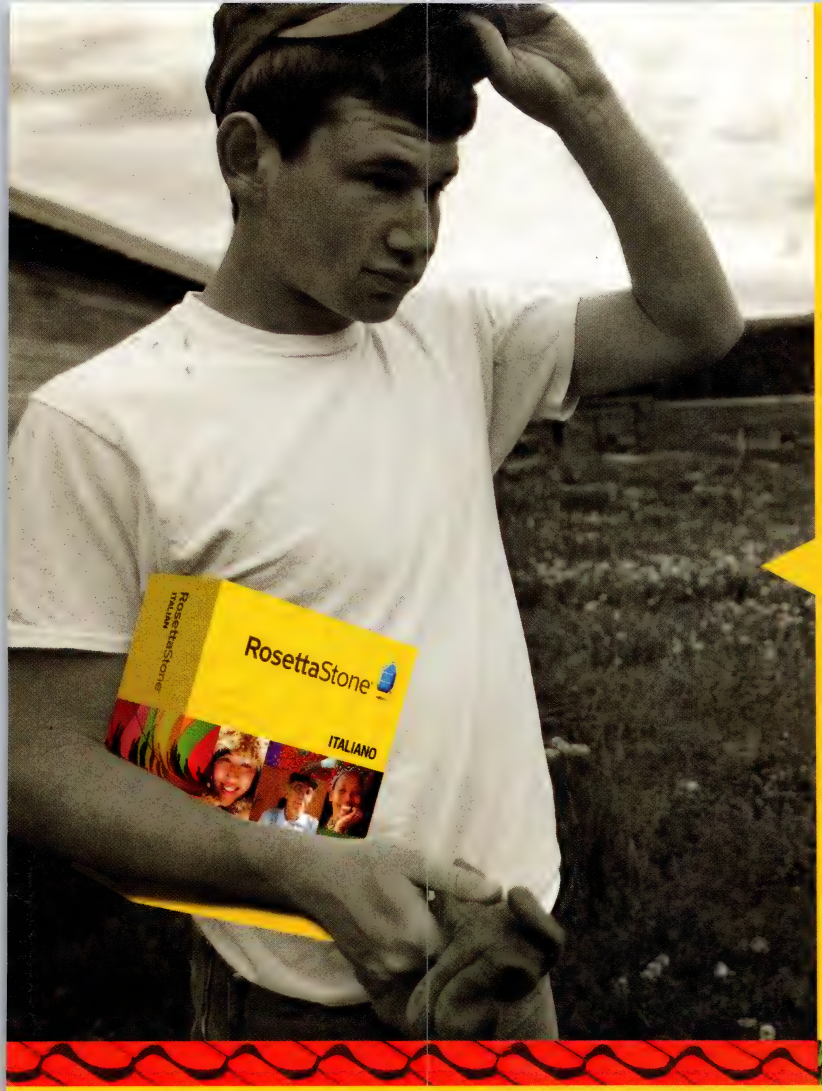
ADOBE PHOTOSHOP CS4

Adobe Systems, Inc.
www.adobe.com
Price: $999 (Extended), $699 (Standard), $349 (upgrade to Extended), $199 (upgrade to Standard)
Requirements: Mac OS 10.4.11 or higher, 512 MB RAM (1 GB Recommended), G5 or Intel processor, Internet connection for authorization

+ Nondestructive layer masks. Content-aware scaling. Cool additions to Camera Raw. Impressive productivity enhancements.

− No 64-bit support. Expensive upgrade pricing.

Mac|Life RATED GREAT



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FLIP MINOHD

VIDEO IN YOUR POCKET

Only a few years ago, shooting and editing video to share with your friends could be a huge hassle. Even with all the video-editing software and ever-growing variety of DV cameras, editing that video of you being spit on by a llama at the petting zoo could still be a pain.

Fortunately for those filmed being accosted by exotic animals, video camera technology has progressed beyond tape technology, and camera prices have dropped dramatically. Wannabe Spielbergs can shoot and share the fruits of their video labor with relative ease. The Flip MinoHD is a good example of what is available today for the YouTube-loving masses.

Shoot HD video anywhere.

The Flip MinoHD jumps on the widescreen HD bandwagon, because we all know that widescreen and HD are the new black. The new addition to the Flip family shoots video at 1280x720, double that of its sibling, the Flip Mino. This bump in resolution gives you a more vibrant final video with fewer artifacts. Unfortunately, the screen on the Flip MinoHD is identical to that of the Flip Mino. Because the display is the standard aspect ratio, instead of widescreen, the image on the display is teeny tiny. When you are shooting your subjects they seem smaller than they need to be. You'll encounter the same situation when reviewing your videos on the device. Hopefully, Flip will rectify this situation in future incarnations of the MinoHD.

The controls on the back of the camera are intuitive and the buttons light up when their functions are available. Flip mysteriously removed the ability to use digital zoom before recording video, which is an odd feature not to carry over from the Flip Mino. Flip's sharing and editing software is stored on the Flip MinoHD and is user friendly. You can share your videos via YouTube, AOL Video, MySpace, and email. Email sharing sends recipients a link to a player on Flip's website. Videos can be exported as movies with music and titles as H.264 MPEGs or as videos ready to burned to DVD. While the software boasts editing ability, it is editing in the loosest sense of the term. You can trim the videos and connect multiple videos together, but that's pretty much it.

The quality of the video is surprisingly good. Going from low-light to bright-light situations was a smooth transition. The MinoHD's white balance also performed very well. Skin tones registered true to life. The camera handled quick movements without too many artifacts or the "wavies" that plague other low-end video cameras. The Flip MinoHD needs to handle quick movement well because it has no image stabilization. Videos shot while walking or after drinking any sort of caffeinated drink can resemble *Cloverfield* without the creepy spider monsters. If you're looking for a stable shot, you should use the tripod mount on the bottom of the camera. In addition to the lack of image stabilization, the camera has no audio input. The internal mic is serviceable in low-background noise situations, but can be easily overpowered by traffic, wind, and the baying of animals.

Still, with all its limitations, the Flip MinoHD is a fun little video camera. It doesn't try to cram in features that the intended audience doesn't want or need. The biggest drawback of video cameras is that their owners don't want to lug them around after the first month of ownership. The Flip MinoHD solves that problem with its small size and ease of use.

The Bottom Line. The Flip MinoHD is a fun camera with surprisingly good-quality video—albeit a tad on the pricey side—whose videos can induce nausea if shot while walking. But, it's perfect for the on-the-go video adventurer.
—*Roberto Baldwin*

FLIP MINOHD

Pure Digital
www.theflip.com
Price: $229.99
Requirements: 1.66 GHz Intel Core Duo, 1 GB of RAM, OS 10.4 or later, and USB 2.0

\+ Lightweight. Easy-to-use software. Good image quality in a small package. Simple transfer to your computer with flip-out USB connector.

− No image stabilization. No sound input.

MacLife RATED GREAT

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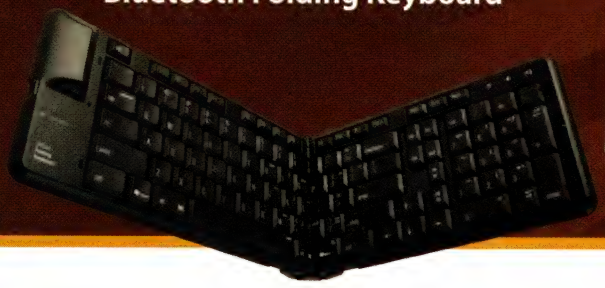


H-Squared

Air Mount for Airport Extreme

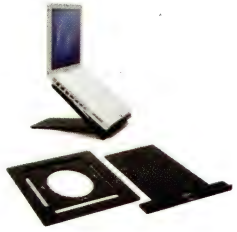
Blackmagic Design
Video Recorder

Case-Mate
Naked Case for iPhone 3G

Macsense
JustMobile Xtand

IPEVO
Universal Pointer Cam

Blue Microphones
Eyeball Mic with Webcam



Matias
iRizer Laptop Stand

Ten One Design
Pogo Sketch

Softpress
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Dr. Bott LLC

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ZEISS
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ALL THINGS AUDIO

NUMARK iDJ2

PUT THE NEEDLE ON THE... OH, NEVER MIND

With a few improvements to its scratching mechanism, this digital DJ rig could replace old-school turntables and vinyl discs for good.

Wicky wicky wicky.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARK MADEO

DJing has changed dramatically since you destroyed your parents' Boston albums emulating Jam Master Jay. The Numark iDJ2 lets you embrace the digital path of DJing without spending thousands of dollars on equipment and vinyl albums.

The mixer adds an iPod dock to a self-contained DJ rig. DJs-in-training import their music into the device's library from an iPod or USB thumb drive. Navigating the file system and sending songs to their appropriate "turntable" on the easy-to-read display is intuitive, and after about 15 minutes, you'll be swapping beats back and forth like a pro.

The top of the device contains myriad knobs, sliders, lights, and displays. At first glance it seems overwhelming, but you'll soon realize you need them all to attain optimal def-ness on the turntable. Faders, pitch control, tri-band equalizer, gain and jog wheels give you incredible control over your tracks. The pitch control allows you to change the tempo of your selection for easier blending of tracks with slightly differing beats per minute. The biggest drawback is the actual scratching you can do on the iDJ2. The rubber jog wheel, while easy to grip, doesn't replicate the feel of vinyl, and we found it difficult to consistently get a track back to speed after "scratching."

The light, yet rugged, plastic case won't take the same beating as a metal mixer, but it's still sturdy enough to give users years of service before taking any serious damage. Numark gives you audio ports aplenty, and the sound quality is spectacular.

The bottom line. A great prosumer DJ rig with all the bells and whistles you need to bring it. Just don't expect to become DJ AM with its less-than-stellar scratching capability.—*Roberto Baldwin*

iDJ2

Numark
www.numark.com
Price: $529.99
Requirements: For full functionality: 4th generation iPod and up, all iPod minis, all iPod nanos

\+ Unprecedented control of your music. Intuitive navigation system. More audio ports than you can shake a booty at.

− Pricey for hobbyists. Scratching on the device is difficult.

Mac|Life RATED GREAT

SIMPLIFY MEDIA

ARE YOU HEARING WHAT I'M HEARING?

One of the features of iTunes that comes in handy on large networks is the ability to share music libraries with other iTunes users. Simplify Media extended this functionality in iTunes back in 2007 by allowing sharing with up to 30 other people outside of your local network. With the Simplify Media app from the App Store, you can add your iPhone or iPod touch into the mix, and stream your tunes anywhere there's a Wi-Fi or cell signal.

The app won't work without an account on Simplify Media's network. Account creation requires downloading the desktop app for Mac, Windows, or Linux and agreeing to Simplify Media's terms of service. Once the account is created, you'll have access to your own iTunes library over the network, which should please people with music libraries so large they don't fit on the iPhone. When sharing with other users, Simplify Media lets you see their libraries, though the mobile app won't let you see files protected by FairPlay digital rights-management technology used by the iTunes store—which is more Apple's fault than Simplify Media's. Sharing can't be set up in the mobile app, but once you've set it up from a computer, connecting other machines or mobile devices is as simple as logging in to your account.

With access to a few friends' libraries, Simplify Media becomes an on-demand streaming jukebox. It also allows the shuffling of playlists (but not of libraries), effectively turning a friend's computer into a one-listener radio station. Playback is possible over Wi-Fi, 3G, or EDGE, and Simplify Media is smart enough to compress the digital files for congested or slow networks.

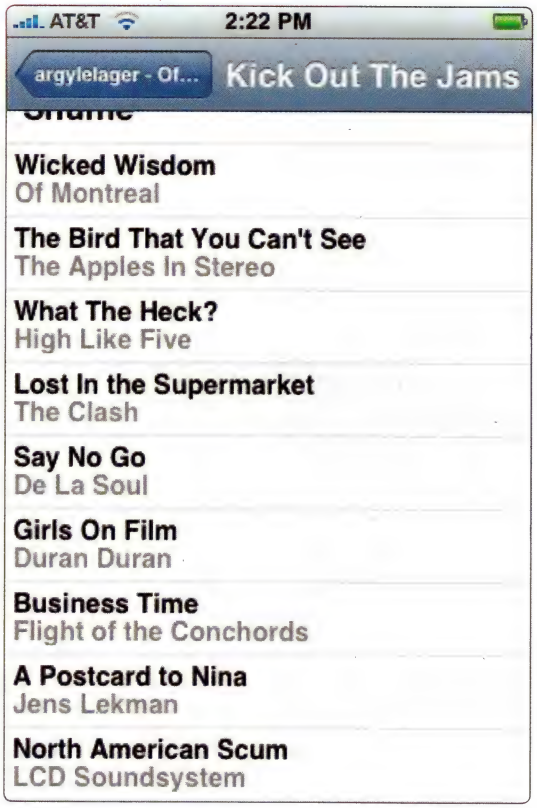
Simplify Media suggests that most users' machines will be able to serve two streams at a time without difficulty—we didn't have any friends whose computers were too busy, but there are no status indicators on the mobile app; we had to look at the desktop app to come to this conclusion. There's also no way to delete friends from an iPod or iPhone. And since Apple won't allow backgrounding, the app won't play while you check email or surf the Web from your mobile device, the way you can when using the device's native iPod capabilities.

When playing a song, buttons at the top allow three views. Song view shows the artist name, song title, album title, year of release, and album art, although in our experience, art didn't always display properly. Artist view pulls a band photo and bio from Last.fm, and Lyrics view grabs lyrics from lyricwiki.org. In all three views, a volume slider is visible, but it can be a bit sluggish responding to swipes. Fortunately, the hardware volume control worked without problems.

Simplify Media says that the streaming it enables is legal because it is private and limited. But just because the streaming isn't criminal doesn't mean that the recording industry won't try to file civil suits against users, alleging that their digital audio transmission public performance rights guaranteed in 17 USC 106(6) have been violated. Indeed, the Simplify Media license requires users to make sure their sharing doesn't result in copyright infringement. Because only friends can "perform" the work digitally for others, most reasonable people would consider Simplify Media's use of streaming to be private performance. If the record companies wanted to challenge that in court, it would be difficult to litigate because of how limited friend networks are.

When adding a new friend's library, it may take the mobile app a few minutes to download the list of songs before the library becomes accessible. We also had one crash in a few hours of listening, but given the performance of some other App Store apps—including Apple's—that didn't seem unreasonable.

The bottom line. Simplify Media enables sharing of music libraries outside of the local network, allowing a peek at the musical tastes of friends. Without friends, the app is still useful for people with music libraries too large to fit on their iPhones.—*Jason Whong*



Stream your—or your friend's—tunes straight into your iPhone or touch.

SIMPLIFY MEDIA

Simplify Media
www.simplifymedia.com
Price: Free for the desktop version, $3.99 for the iPhone app
Requirements: iPhone or iPod touch. A computer running at least one of the following: Mac OS 10.4 or 10.5 with iTunes 7.x; Windows XP with Service Pack 2 or Windows Vista with iTunes 7.x, or WinAmp 5.35 or 5.5; or Ubuntu Linux 8.0.4 or later, and Rhythmbox

+ Cross-platform. Streams media without being on same network. Artist bios from Last.fm. Lyrics from LyricWiki.

− iPhone app doesn't see iTunes FairPlay-protected songs. Needs companion computer app to get started. Volume slider and album art are temperamental.

Mac|Life RATED GREAT

Clean lines and touch controls give the GrooveNeo a futuristic vibe.

CYGNETT GROOVENEO

WAKE UP! GET YOUR GROOVE ON

The Cygnett GrooveNeo is one of the best-looking iPod alarm clocks we've seen in a while. Where many manufacturers go for buttons and functions and lights galore, the GrooveNeo keeps it simple. The unit's modern design is enhanced by the use of touch-sensitive controls on the top of the clock to control all of the functions.

Sound-wise, the GrooveNeo is as good as we can expect from a pair of 2.75-inch speakers. The GrooveNeo isn't poised to replace your home stereo, but it makes a great countertop speaker for a spare bedroom or office. The 40-step volume control gets plenty loud, and the sound was surprisingly clean, even at higher-than-comfortable volumes. Like most recent iPod speaker accessories, the GrooveNeo comes with a small remote capable of controlling the speakers. The remote itself is well designed and features logical button layouts. While you can navigate iPod menus via the remote, we find that navigating via the iPod itself often ends up being more convenient. Still, for those who need it, being able to program alarms and control playback is useful. And, thanks to some extra buttons on the remote, turning alarms on and off is actually easier via the remote than it is using the GrooveNeo's buttons.

We really liked the GrooveNeo's extra large clock display. The display has a high and low setting—in addition to off—which makes it perfect to use as just an alarm clock. Our only gripe about the display is that the high setting also activates a fairly bright blue LED that shines from the bottom of the unit, and there's no way to turn the blue LED off without dimming the clock display. The blue LED works well as a night light for guests, but we wouldn't want to have to sleep next to it every night.

The clock features dual alarms and can wake to an AM or FM station or tracks from your iPod. There's also a stereo mini input jack at the back of the unit, so the GrooveNeo can be used as speakers for a laptop, portable DVD player, or other audio source. The dock worked fine with a variety of iPods. When we docked our iPhone 3G, the phone displayed a message that the device wasn't compatible, but after dismissing the dialogue, playback worked fine.

The bottom line. Responsive touch controls, good looks, and decent sound make the GrooveNeo stand out in a crowded field.

—Ray Aguilera

GROOVENEO

Cygnett
www.cygnett.com
Price: $89.99
Requirements: Dockable iPod or iPhone

\+ Touch controls. Large clock display. Dual alarms. AM/FM radio. Battery backup via two AAs.

\− No radio presets. Distracting blue LED can't be turned off without dimming the main display.

Mac|Life RATED GREAT

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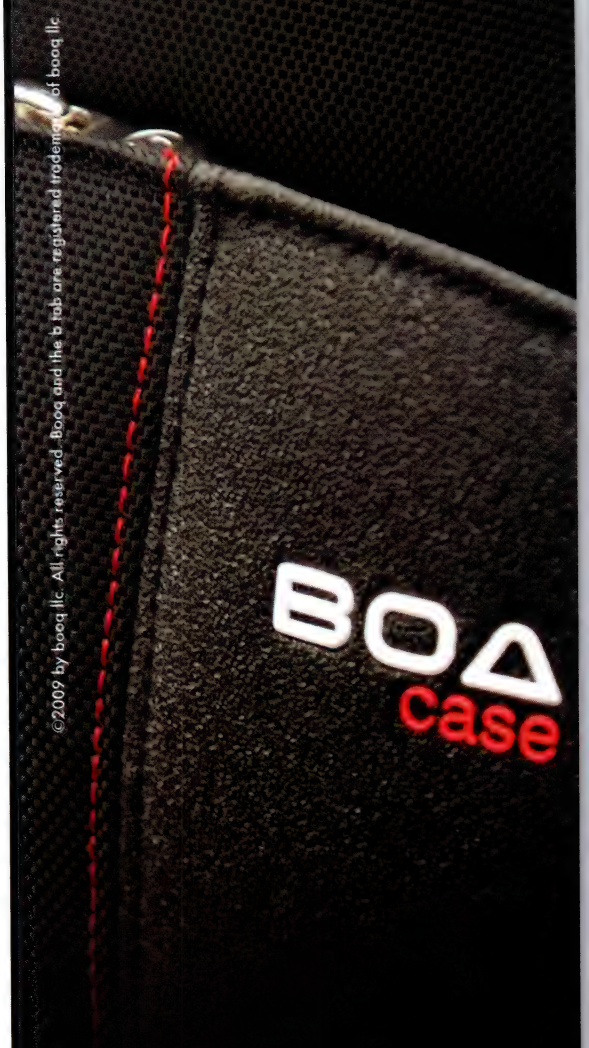

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GRIFFIN TECHNOLOGY TUNEBUDS MOBILE

SOUND CONTROL

We've never been fans of the way Apple's packed-in white earbuds fit. It seems like no matter how we shove, twist, cram, or delicately place them in our ears, they just won't stay put. Apple recently introduced its In-Ear Headphones ($79, www.apple.com), promising better sound and a more comfortable fit, thanks to silicone ear tips that seal off your ear canal. But since Apple's already lost our business in the headphone space, we were pleased to try Griffin Technology's TuneBuds Mobile, a similar set of comfy, iPhone-compatible earbuds that up the ante on the junky 'buds Apple included with your device. Plus, the TuneBuds cost half as much as upgrading to Apple's new In-Ear Headphones.

The TuneBuds' ControlMic microphone is built into the cable on the right earbud, dangling near your chin where it picks up your voice for clear phone calls. (If you have a second-gen iPod touch, 120GB iPod classic, or fourth-gen iPod nano, you can even use the ControlMic to record audio directly to your device.) The mic's button lets you answer calls (press once while the phone is ringing), send a call right to voicemail (press for two seconds), and control your music playback (press once to play or pause, twice to advance a track, and three times to go back).

The 50-inch cable is wrapped in what Griffin calls "tangle-eliminating nylon braiding," meaning the cables feel fabric-covered rather than plasticky. This makes the cable seem stronger, and when we shoved them in our coat pocket between uses, we noticed that they didn't get quite as tangled as plastic-cabled earbuds tend to. The cable is capped by a svelte 3.5mm plug that fits in the first-gen iPhone's recessed earphone jack without an adapter. Griffin includes three sets of washable silicone ear tips and a zippered carrying case.

The TuneBuds' sound impressed us, especially for earbuds at this low price point. The low end was strong in our hip-hop and hard rock tracks, the sparse details of a Brian Eno album came through faithfully, and the subtle sound effects in an episode of *Lost* were appropriately creepy. Calls sounded clear, and our conversation partners said the TuneBuds sounded better than Apple's cheap white earbuds.

The bottom line. Griffin's TuneBuds Mobile pack impressive quality for a low price, and they're comfy enough to wear all day.—*Susie Ochs*

The nylon-braiding-wrapped cable looks nicer and feels stronger than plastic.

Mac|Life Editors' Choice

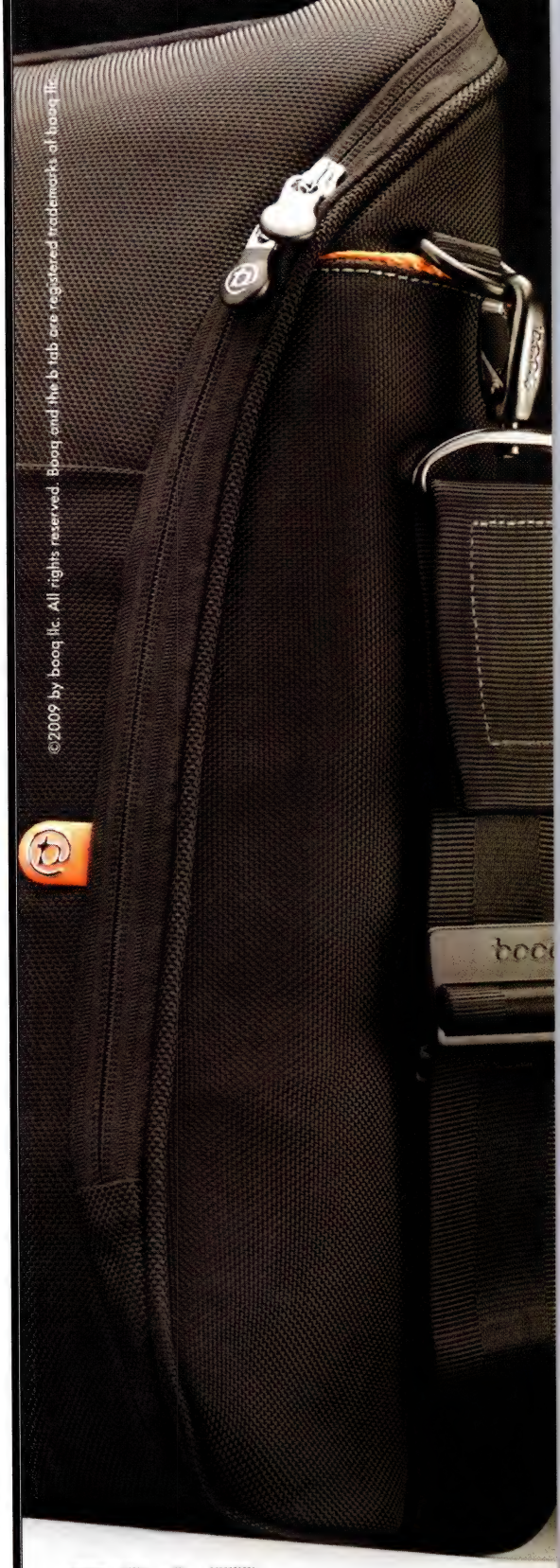
TUNEBUDS MOBILE

Griffin Technology
www.griffintechnology.com
Price: $39.99
Requirements: 3.5mm audio jack

+ Compatible with first- and second-gen iPhone. Great sound. Comfortable fit. Low price. Tangle-resistant cable. Fits in first-gen iPhone's recessed headphone jack without an adapter.

− Double and triple clicks of the ControlMic button need to be fast, or they'll be recognized as single clicks.

Mac|Life RATED AWESOME



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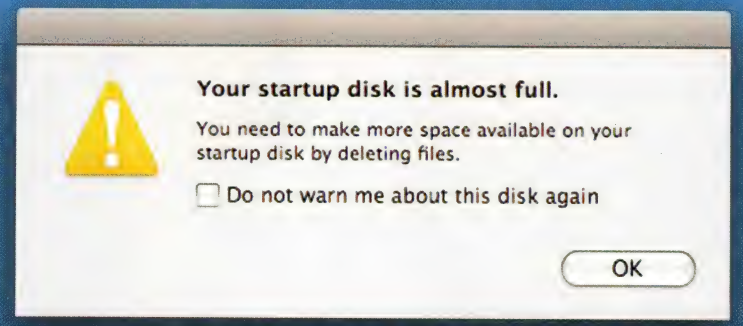

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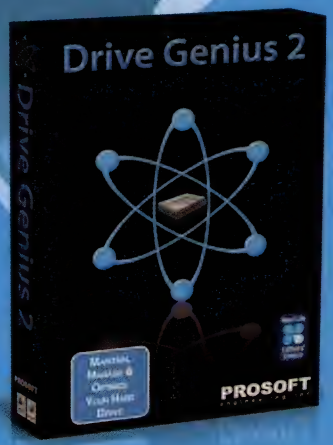

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WACKY iPOD ACCESSORIES

iPOD ADD-ONS YOU DIDN'T KNOW YOU NEEDED

Brilliant or ridiculous? With these accessories for your iPod touch or iPhone, it's pretty much your call. Each is a solution to a particular "problem"—using the touchscreen with gloves on, keeping videos at eye level without tiring your arm out, or making your device look different from the ones everyone else is carrying. If those happen to be *your* problems, well, here you go.—*Susie Ochs*

ETRE TOUCHY

These gloves leave about half of each thumb and index finger waving in the breeze, all the better to caress the touchscreen of your iPod touch or iPhone. They also come in handy for other tactile tasks, such as working the buttons on a camera, phone, or other gadget; using your iPod's clickwheel; or smoking a cigarette with a pinch-style grip.

Who needs them? People living in cold climates who want to wear gloves but still need to touch screens, thumb-type, or pinch the ends of cigarettes.

The bottom line. These bad boys are nice and soft as well as good-looking—just nerdy enough to start conversations but not so nerdy that bullies will want to beat you up.

ETRE TOUCHY

Etre Ltd.
www.etretouchy.com
Price: £14.99 ($21.81 at press time)
Requirements: Hands

+ Great for the iPod touch, iPhone, other gadgets, and for smoking cigarettes. Handsome design and good construction.

− Smoking cigarettes is bad for you.

Mac|Life RATED GREAT

SOARIPOD

The funky-looking Soaripod holds your iPod touch or iPhone at eye level, or wherever you need it, really. It clips onto a desk, dashboard, nightstand, or airline seat, and lets you watch your videos and look at photos without enduring the effort of holding your device with your own hand and arm.

Who needs it? People who watch lots of iPhone or iPod touch videos on planes and have had no luck building makeshift stands out of an in-flight pillow and copy of *SkyMall*.

The bottom line. It's like a one-legged Gorillapod for your iPhone or iPod touch, but that other gizmo's three-legged design can attach to more surfaces than the Soaripod's metal P-clamp. Still, it's sturdy and gets the job done.

SOARIPOD

Papadakis Technologies
soaripod.com
Price: $29.95
Requirements: iPod touch or iPhone

+ Easily adjustable, sturdy stand keeps device at eye level for comfortable viewing. Includes mesh carrying case.

− Takes up a 6-by-4-by-2-inch space in your carry-on bag.

Mac|Life RATED SOLID

TATSKINZ

TatSkinz covers most of the front of an iPhone or iPod touch with a removable sticker. Another sticker goes on the back, leaving the camera and Apple logo uncovered, as well as bare strips on all sides—the back sticker for an iPhone 3G measures 2 by 4.1 inches, so you'll see a bit of the phone's 2.4-by-4.5-inch back panel. A few dozen designs let you change up the style of your device.

Who needs it? People who love to customize everything they own and don't mind paying $15 for two stickers.

The bottom line. The stylish stickers are thick enough to provide some scratch protection, but we're most worried about the screen and edges of our device being scratched, and TatSkinz doesn't cover those. The company recommends using it in concert with the BodyGuardz all-around protection ($24.95, www.bodyguardz.com). But we do appreciate how easy it is to get the stickers off if you want to change designs.

TATSKINZ

NLU Products
www.tatskinz.com
Price: $14.95
Requirements: iPod touch or iPhone (versions available for other iPods and gadgets)

+ Tons of designs to choose from. Easy to remove, doesn't leave marks or sticky residue.

− Edges of front piece don't go all the way to the edges of the device. Back piece leaves some of the casing uncovered.

Mac|Life RATED SOLID

GRADO SR60

PLAY THAT FUNKY MUSIC

Aside from a gargantuan hard drive to hold all of our tunes (and movies), our favorite iPod accessory is a good pair of headphones. More than anything else, decent cans give us the most bang for our buck in terms of increasing our enjoyment of our media collection. For commuting, we prefer in-ear models for their small size and ability to block out external noise, but we reach for larger headphones for when we're sitting at a desk or even relaxing next to the stereo at home. Serious audiophiles have been known to drop hundreds—or even thousands—of dollars on a good pair of headphones. Grado's entry-level SR60 'phones represent a good balance between audio quality and affordability.

They may not look impressive, but it's the sound that counts.

Grado is known for high-end headphones and cartridges for your turntable. Fortunately for Joe Consumer, they've put a lot of the same tech and experience from years of hand-building high-end 'phones into the SR60s. While they lack the mahogany or aluminum air chambers and premium wiring of their more expensive siblings, the sound quality is impressive. Higher-end models sport leather headbands and metal or wood chambers, but the SR60s use much more affordable vinyl and black plastic. While they don't look particularly slick, we found the build quality excellent. The cable ends in a standard stereo mini-jack, perfect for your iPod or MacBook, and Grado includes a 1/4-inch adapter for use with home stereos. Our SR60s have put up with heavy daily use for months and don't look any worse for wear. The open-air design makes them great for use in environments where you still need to hear things going on around you—but it also means that people nearby will hear snippets of whatever you happen to be playing, even at medium volume levels. Consider that before indulging in your secret Air Supply obsession.

We listened to everything from reggaetón to classical to straight-ahead rock and were impressed with the SR60's consistency. While other 'phones tend to accentuate the high or low end—and coat everything else in sonic mud—we discovered that these Grados offer accurate sound reproduction across the spectrum. We wish these headphones were more comfortable to wear for extended periods, but for the price, the quality is hard to beat.

The bottom line. If you're not quite ready for the price tags normally associated with audiophile gear, Grado's SR60 headphones represent a huge leap in quality for not that much cash.—*Ray Aguilera*

SR60

Grado
www.gradolabs.com
Price: $69
Requirements: Audio device with 1/8-inch or 1/4-inch jack

+ Great sound quality. Open design allows you to hear outside sounds.

− Not very cool looking. Can be uncomfortable to wear for extended periods of time. At anything beyond low volume, everyone else hears your music too.

Mac|Life RATED GREAT

Calculus Is the Exploration of Two Basic Ideas. Master Them and Open a New World for Yourself!

Change and Motion: Calculus Made Clear, 2nd Edition, on DVD

One of the greatest achievements of the mind is calculus. It belongs in the pantheon of our accomplishments with Shakespeare's plays, Beethoven's symphonies, and Einstein's theory of relativity. Calculus is a beautiful idea exposing the rational workings of the world.

Calculus, separately invented by Newton and Leibniz, is one of the most fruitful strategies for analyzing our world ever devised. Calculus has made it possible to build bridges that span miles of river, travel to the moon, and predict patterns of population change. The fundamental insight of calculus unites the way we see economics, astronomy, population growth, engineering, and even baseball. Calculus is the mathematical structure that lies at the core of a world of seemingly unrelated issues.

Expanding the Insight

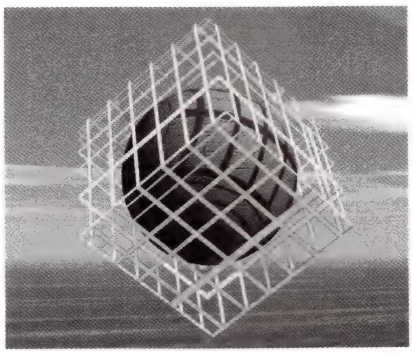
Yet for all its computational power, calculus is the exploration of just two ideas—the derivative and the integral—both of which arise from a commonsense analysis of motion. All a 1,300-page calculus textbook holds, Professor Michael Starbird asserts, are those two basic ideas and 1,298 pages of examples, applications, and variations.

Professor Starbird teaches that calculus does not require a complicated vocabulary or notation to understand it. "Calculus is a crowning intellectual achievement of humanity that all intelligent people can appreciate, enjoy, and understand."

This series is not designed as a college calculus course; rather, it will help you see calculus around you in the everyday world. Every step is in English rather than "mathese." The course takes the approach that every equation is also a sentence that can be understood, and solved, in English.

About Your Professor

Professor Michael Starbird is a distinguished and highly popular teacher with an uncommon talent for making the wonders of mathematics clear to nonmathematicians. He is Professor of Mathematics and



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a Distinguished Teaching Professor at The University of Texas at Austin. Professor Starbird has won several teaching awards, most recently the 2007 Mathematical Association of America Deborah and Franklin Tepper Haimo National Award for Distinguished College or University Teaching of Mathematics, which is limited to three recipients annually from the 27,000 members of the MAA.

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APPETITE FOR DESTRUCTION

Smash 'em up, smash 'em up, buddy gonna shut you down.

If most of your time behind the wheel is spent commuting, hauling groceries, or shuttling a bunch of freeloading kids around, two new driving games for the Mac can help you recapture the thrill of the open road—or just get out your frustrations by ruthlessly smashing every car in sight.

ToCA Race Driver 3, brought to the Mac by Feral Interactive, originally debuted on Windows, the PlayStation 2, and the Xbox in 2006. It's simply packed: 35-plus types of racing, 80 real-world tracks, and 70 licensed vehicles. World Tour mode sends you through 30-some championship series, starting in cute little Renault Clio cars and working your way up to Formula 1. In Pro Career mode, you choose one racing discipline and try to unlock all the championship cups in that class. Free Race mode is for quick racing on anything you've unlocked so far, and you can also challenge human opponents over the local network or online

It seems like every kind of racing is here—off-roading, oval racing, rally racing, open-wheel, and lots more—and the game features both modern machines and classics, like 1970s muscle cars. But you don't need to be a gearhead to have fun. We found ToCA pretty easy to pick up and play (opting for an automatic transmission over manual helps a ton), and the difficulty ramps up gradually as you unlock more races. The cars handle realistically, and you can incur damage from bumping your opponents or going off the track, although in this game you're actually trying to keep the car in one piece.

Not so with FlatOut 2. Also starting life on the PlayStation 2, Xbox, and Windows in 2006, this is an arcade racer with a heavy emphasis on destruction. It's got three car classes—derby, race, and street—and you win by wrecking your opponents, either by smashing into them or by running them into the destructible scenery. Combining speed plus aggression earns you credits to buy more cars or upgrade your current ones. Completing each short cup series unlocks a demolition derby (smash up your opponents to be the last car standing) and a stunt minigame.

The stunts are quite ridiculous, but mercilessly short and super fun to play over and over. Each one has you smash your car and launch its driver through the windshield and into the air, where you control his sickening flight to aim him at the goal. In one stunt, he smashes into bowling pins; another has him flying through rings of fire; in another you try to get him to flop lifelessly through a basketball hoop. The rag doll physics cause the driver to flip and flop realistically as he bounces off objects and slams into the ground, and the bone-crushing thud had us cringing every time. A Party mode lets you challenge your friends to a set of six stunts, and you just pass around the controller and take turns playing on one Mac. Our biggest complaint is the hard-rock soundtrack (Nickelback, Audioslave, Megadeth, and so on), which seemed dated and a little too "high school weight room."

Speaking of controllers, you can play FlatOut 2 with the keyboard (which we hated), a proper racing wheel (if you are a big enough racing-game fan to own one), or a USB gamepad (we used a Logitech Dual Action gamepad, which was perfect considering this game's console origins). ToCA Race Driver 3 can also be played with the keyboard, a racing wheel, or a gamepad, and we found the Logitech Dual Action's analog sticks capable of fairly precise control if you don't own a wheel.

Both games can be played online. FlatOut 2 uses the GameSpy service for matchups, meaning you can play against PC or Mac users, battling up to seven opponents at once. ToCA uses GameRanger and supports playing against Mac users only, although you can race against 12 players.

The bottom line. Racing fans will be wowed by ToCA's variety—not to mention its stellar graphics and car handling—while FlatOut 2 is aimed at smash-'em-up fun. We're glad to have both in our garage.—*Susie Ochs*

TOCA RACE DRIVER 3

Feral Interactive
www.feralinteractive.com
Price: $50
Requirements: 1.8GHz Intel processor, Mac OS 10.4.8 or later, 512MB RAM, 128MB dedicated VRAM, 8.5GB free disk space

+ Placeholder text. Will add some more here. More than 70 licensed cars and 80 tracks. Realistic physics and destruction. Tour, career, simulation, and multiplayer modes (up to 12 players online) offer lots of value. Gorgeous visuals. Realistic handling and damage. ESRB Rating: Everyone.

− Intel Macs only. Online multiplayer against other Mac users only.

Mac|Life RATED GREAT

FLATOUT 2

Virtual Programming Ltd
www.vpltd.com
Price: $39.95
Requirements: Intel processor; Mac OS 10.4.11 or later; 512MB RAM; GeForce 7300, Radeon X1600, or Intel GMA X3100 with 128MB VRAM; 4GB free disk space

+ Fun arcade driving with an emphasis on destruction. Ragdoll minigames for extra diversion. Online multiplayer against PC or Mac users. ESRB Rating: Teen.

− Intel Macs only. Lame soundtrack.

Mac|Life RATED GREAT

We had trouble deciding, so here's creepy and cute.

SPORE CREEPY & CUTE PARTS PACK

THIS CASH-IN IS BANKRUPT

Spore is packed to the gills with ways to customize creatures. But if the built-in menagerie of animal limbs doesn't quite add up to the exact critter you want, the Creepy & Cute Parts Pack add-on mixes in a few dozen alternatives. It requires the full Spore game ($49.95) or the paid Creature Creator ($9.95), updating the creature-editing tool. While this booster pack also includes new animations, paint patterns, and backgrounds, its fun is short-lived. We wanted a full ecosystem of updates, but the Creepy & Cute pack gives us inert brine shrimp and calls them Sea Monkeys.

The expansion pack fulfills its most basic promise; you get 60 new body parts, 48 more paint patterns, and 24 extra animations. The parts and patterns fit the theme of the title, full of doe eyes, razor claws, rag doll stitching, and bloody-organ skin. And the new movements animate your creature in expressive ways, from new dances and gymnastics flips, to being struck by lightning or chased by bees. A couple extra backgrounds allow photos and videos in front of a rainbow-laden world or wasteland scene.

But while those numbers seem like a lot, they're miserly when you get down to playing. The body parts are rationed across categories: 12 parts each to eyes, mouths, hands/feet, arms/legs, and decorations. And you get no new weapons, such as horns. We enjoyed building creatures with these new parts, but we wanted twice as many to justify the effort of installing the new software. And the new animations are entertaining, but we got tired of them in just a few minutes.

Other areas of the game remain untouched by this expansion pack. We wanted new building parts and new vehicle parts too, but those are absent. Worse, no new costume parts that decorate tribal, civilized, and other stages of creatures are added. And other than the creatures being compatible with the rest of the full Spore game, the expansion ignores that playground.

The bottom line. This expansion pack adds moderate variety for obsessive creature creators. But with such limited extras, you could go through everything in a half-hour.—*Zack Stern*

SPORE CREEPY & CUTE PARTS PACK

Electronic Arts
www.ea.com
Price: $19.95
Requirements: Intel Core Duo processor; Mac OS 10.5.3 or later; ATI X1600 or Nvidia 7300GT with 128MB VRAM, or Intel Integrated GMA X3100; full version of Spore or Spore Creature Creator

+ Adds 108 new parts and paint jobs. Two-dozen new animations bring creatures to life within the editor.

− Large-sounding number of new parts feels thin in the game. No new weapon parts. No new costumes. Doesn't improve Spore beyond creature editing.

Mac|Life RATED WEAK

Starting a website this year?

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As the world's largest web hosting provider, 1&1 offers website plans for every skill level and budget. As a 1&1 customer, you are not only assured that your website is up and secure, but you'll also get the tools that you need to maintain an innovative web presence.

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3 months FREE!*

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KIVI'S UNDERWORLD

YOU WON'T PAY MUCH TO PLAY

All the news on TV is bad, the economy stinks, and it seems like it's getting harder and harder to find a low-cost evening of entertainment. Might we suggest some pleasant hack-and-slashery to unwind after a hard day at the office? Kivi's Underworld is a single-player RPG that its developers call casual, but with 30 levels and more than 20 playable characters, there's a lot of game here for your $20—enough to keep you happily slaying monsters, rescuing prisoners, and unraveling the story for days.

The linear plot follows Kivi, a lumen warrior who's trying to defeat the malevolent dark elves, who were unleashed after some kind of mining mishap. Along the way, more characters join the cause, but you don't play with a party as in other RPGs. This is pure hack-and-slash combat: You're controlling one character through each level, trudging through a dungeon killing everything in sight while hunting for the level's ultimate goal (a set of hidden items, a hostage needing rescue, and so on).

Each character class has different attributes and fights with a regular and special attack, but the game doesn't require you to level them up separately. Instead, at the end of each stage you get skill points that you use to level up all the characters at once. It's a great blend of variety and simplicity.

The levels feature tons of monsters to kill, plus dozens of power-ups, traps, hidden rooms, and locked doors. Finding the hidden rooms can be a frustrating matter of clicking every stretch of wall you walk by before tripping the trap doors, but hunting them all down pays off when you win more skill points at the end of a stage.

The controls couldn't be easier—all you need is a mouse, although there are optional keyboard shortcuts too. And the old-school graphics look great, with resolutions from 800x600 to 1920x1200. Our only gripe with the presentation is the lame, repetitive music, but that's easy to turn off.

The bottom line. Kivi's Underworld is a Diablo-esque romp that's fun to play and appropriate for kids. And considering the amount of gameplay you get for $20, your wallet might be as happy as your monster-killing trigger finger.—*Susie Ochs*

KIVI'S UNDERWORLD

Soldak Entertainment
www.soldak.com
Price: $19.99
Requirements: 1.2GHz PowerPC or Intel processor, Mac OS 10.4 or later

+ Fun, casual, hack-and-slash RPG. Forgiving system requirements. Lots of playtime for the price. Universal binary.

− Sound effects grow stale after a while.

Mac|Life RATED GREAT

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TECH SUPPORT & TECHSPLANATIONS

>>>SENDING VIDEOS TO AND FROM A TIVO

I have a TiVo connected to my wireless network. How can I transfer videos back and forth between my TiVo and my Mac?

If you have a network-capable TiVo (such as a TiVo Series3 or TiVo HD) that you've connected to your network via Ethernet or wireless, you can transfer recorded shows from your TiVo's Now Playing List to your Mac—and, for the first time, from your Mac to your TiVo—using Toast 10 Titanium ($99, www.roxio.com). Additionally, Toast can convert those videos into a format that you can play on a large variety of video players, including the iPod, iPhone, Treo, BlackBerry, Apple TV, and PlayStation 3.

If you don't have Toast, you can get videos from your Mac to your TiVo one other way. First, you'll need to convert your videos into MPEG-2 format, using a utility such as VLC (free, www.videolan.org) or Compressor (part of Final Cut Studio; $1,299, www.apple.com). Your TiVo will not properly recognize any other video formats, including MPEG-1 and MPEG-4.

Then, download and install the TiVo Desktop software (free, www.tivo.com/buytivo/tivogear/software/), which lets you stream your iPhoto library and your iTunes music to your TiVo. TiVo Desktop doesn't give you any video functionality off the bat, so you'll need to enable its hidden video transfer feature. First click the Stop button in System Preferences > TiVo Desktop. Launch the Terminal (located in /Applications/Utilities/) and type: **defaults write com.tivo.desktop FileVideo -dict-add VideoUIEnabled -bool true**

Reopen System Preferences > TiVo Desktop, and you'll see that a new Videos tab has appeared. Check the box to publish your videos and choose the folder that has your MPEG-2 videos in it. Note that before you click the Start button, your MPEG-2 videos must already be located in your chosen folder. If you decide to add more videos to that folder later, you'll need to stop and start TiVo Desktop again for it to recognize your new videos.

Finally, on your TiVo, scroll all the way down to the bottom of your Now Playing List, and you'll see your Mac listed there. Choose the videos that you want to transfer, and TiVo will transfer the movies into your Now Playing List so they're available even after your Mac is turned off.

By the way, as soon as you turn on the TiVo Desktop system preference, it will create a properties text file for each MPEG file in your selected movies folder—you can edit this properties file in any text editor to give your video a description that shows up when you select it in your TiVo's Now Playing List.

The free TiVo Desktop software has a hidden feature that lets you transfer videos from your Mac to your TiVo.

Scanning 35mm Slides

I have a large number of 35mm slides that I would like to convert to digital format and put on a CD. How can I do this on the Mac?

If you'd like to undertake this project yourself, you could purchase a dedicated film scanner. For example, Nikon (www.nikonusa.com) makes a series of film scanners under the CoolScan brand name that range in price from $599 to $2,199 and can quickly scan all sorts of film formats into your Mac: slides, negatives, film, and film strips.

You could also purchase a traditional flatbed scanner that comes with a film holder or transparency unit that's built for slides, such as Epson's Perfection series of scanners (starting at $99, www.epson.com).

Alternatively, you can always hand off your project to the professionals and let them do the conversion for you. Companies like DigMyPics (starting at 35 cents per scan,

At $2,199, the Nikon CoolScan 9000 ED is a top-of-the-line film scanner.

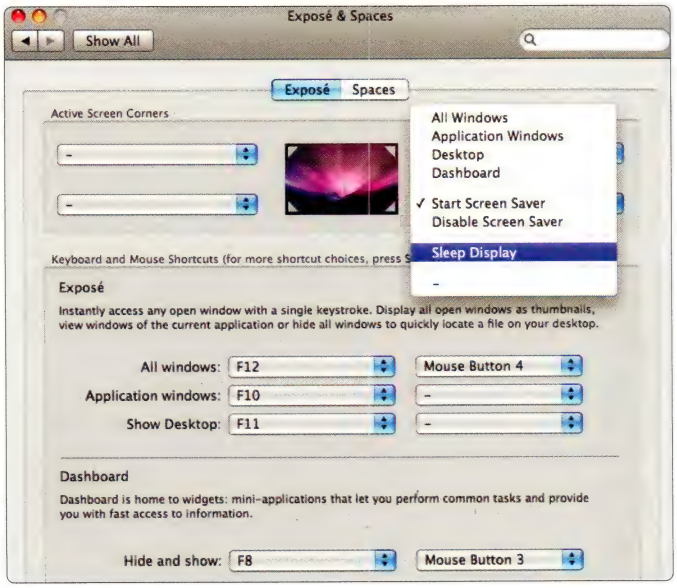
www.digmypics.com) specialize in taking your slides and other analog media—such as negatives, photo prints, film reels, and VHS tapes—and transferring them all into digital format for you. So all you have to do is sit back, kick up your heels, and wait for your digital media to be delivered to your doorstep.

Go to Sleep Now!

Is there a way to put my Mac to sleep with a series of keystrokes, instead of going to the Apple menu and selecting Sleep?

Absolutely! For a quick-sleep keyboard shortcut, hold down Command-Option-Eject for two seconds. If you're looking for a keyboard shortcut to put all displays—but not your Mac itself—to sleep, press Control-Shift-Eject. To get that handy Restart/Sleep/Shut Down/Cancel dialog (the same one you got by pressing the Power button on older Mac keyboards), just press Control-Eject.

It's also possible to put your display (not your whole Mac) to sleep in an instant whenever you drag your mouse cursor to one corner of the screen. Go to System Preferences > Exposé and Spaces > Exposé, and set one of the Active Screen Corners to Sleep Display.



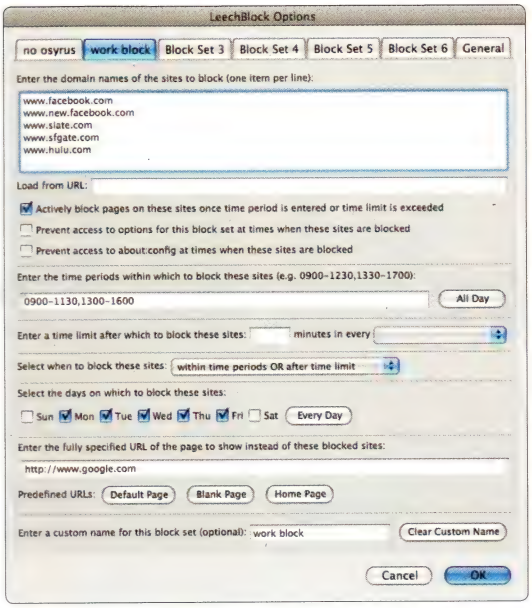
Active Screen Corners can put your display to sleep, but not your Mac.

Self-Denial for Fun and Profit

I have a bit of a problem. I obsessively check certain websites (cough, cough, Facebook) when I'm supposed to be working. Is there a way to block those sites during the workdays but still allow access after hours and on the weekends?

Firefox makes this easy to accomplish thanks to its ultrahandy add-ons, specifically one called LeechBlock. Go to Tools > Add-ons > Get Add-ons, and type LeechBlock into the search box. Once it's installed, go to Tools > LeechBlock > Options, and you'll find a huge list of options for blocking those time-wasting sites. You can specify certain days and times, what page Firefox displays instead of the blocked one, and lots more.

To block a site in Safari without using Tiger's or Leopard's Parental Controls (which you can't use on an administrator account anyway) or fiddling with the Terminal, you can install the free add-on Safari AdBlock (safariadblock.sourceforge.net), and make it think your time-wasting sites are just giant ads. Go to Safari > Preferences > AdBlock, click the Custom Filters tab, click the plus sign, and set the pull-down



This set blocks five time-wasting sites between the hours of 9-11:30 a.m. and 1-4 p.m. on the weekdays.

menus to Block Elements Whose URL Starts With http://your-blocked-site.com. You can turn AdBlock on and off in that same preference, under the General tab, for times you want to allow yourself to squander a few minutes online. (Now get back to work.)

Battery Blues

I have a MacBook running Tiger, and my battery doesn't stay charged as long as it used to. I know Apple says batteries should retain up to 80 percent of their charge capacity for up to 300 full charge-and-deplete cycles, but I never bothered to count how many times I've charged the battery since buying this laptop. Is there a utility that can help me?

We recommend iStat Pro (free, www.islayer.com), which is a Dashboard widget that keeps track of lots of data about your Mac's performance: CPU and memory usage, hard disk space, system temperatures, running processes, and of course, battery life and health, including the total number of charge cycles. The cycle count is also found in System Profiler (Applications/Utilities), under Power > Battery Information > Health Information > Cycle Count, but the iStat Pro widget can also tell you the relative health of your battery, as a percentage of its original capacity. If you don't think your battery is performing as it should, contact Apple through www.apple.com/support/macbook_macbookpro/batteryupdate.

The Battery section shows us that after just 167 charge cycles, we're down to 76 percent of the original battery capacity. (The 50 percent figure is for our Bluetooth keyboard's batteries.)

Ask is written by Scott Rose, a Los Angeles-based FileMaker developer and Mac consultant. Visit him at www.scottworld.com.

GOT A TECH QUESTION OR A HELPFUL TIP TO SHARE?

Email ask@maclife.com or write to *Mac|Life*, 4000 Shoreline Ct, Suite 400, South San Francisco, CA 94080.

>>>Create

HOW TO DO ANYTHING ON YOUR MAC

Don't forget, once your to-do list is all organized and synced across your devices, you actually have to start doing things.

>>>WHAT YOU NEED

LEVEL: easy

>> Internet connection
>> Firefox (free, www.mozilla.com)
>> Tasks you need to accomplish

Access Your To-Do List from Anywhere

Trouble staying on task or remembering what's next? Try keeping your to-do list synched between your Mac, your phone—and even your Windows PC.

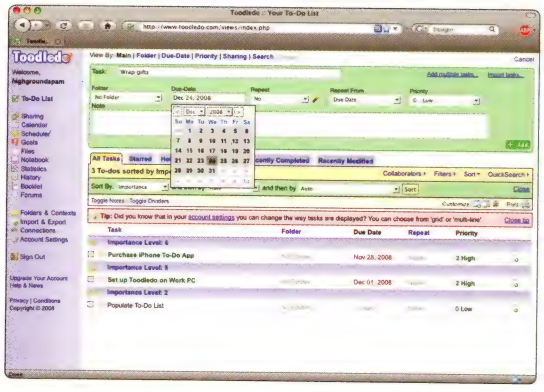
Organization is happiness. If you stay on top of the things you need to do, you leave yourself more time for the things you *want* to do. That's why a detailed, efficient to-do application can be such a huge help. There's just one problem: Even the best organizational software is useless if you have no way to access it.

The solution: Centralize! Unify! By using online tools as the core of your task management solution, you get persistent coverage and the ability to access your to-dos from work, from home, or on the go. It's just a matter of finding a language spoken by all your devices.

BY JOE RYBICKI

1 Core Competence

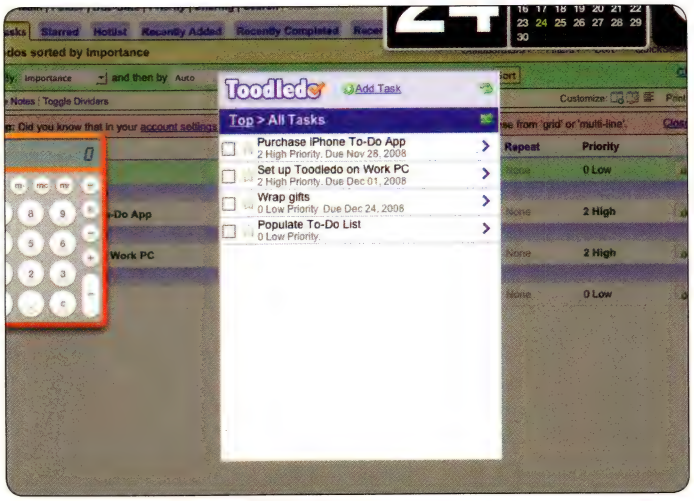
Fortunately, we've done the legwork for you. The site that's going to sit at the center of our web of productivity is Toodledo (www.toodledo.com), a robust task-management suite that's completely free at its basic level, which is all we need for our to-do list synchronization. Head on over and sign up for a membership. Once you complete the signup process, you'll be greeted with a view of your to-do list with a couple default items already inserted for you. You can go ahead and add more items here, but let's be honest: The interface is a bit clunky.



Toodledo's Web interface works OK, but it's not much to look at.

2 Dashboard Professional

It's a good thing Toodledo plays so nice with others. Assuming you have a reliable Internet connection (sorry, Antarcticans!) you can add a Toodledo widget to the Dashboard of your Mac running OS 10.4 or higher. Click the Connections link in Toodledo's left-hand sidebar and scroll down to the Apple Dashboard entry. Click the More Details link, download the widget, and double-click it to install. After signing in, you'll be able to view, edit, and add to your Toodledo list just by bringing up the Dashboard.



The Dashboard widget keeps your to-dos at your fingertips—if you use Dashboard.

3 Just Browsing

Of course, since your to-do list now lives in the tubes of the Internet, you can access it from any browser just by visiting Toodledo's site. But if you're running the awesomely expandable, open-source browser Firefox, there's an even more elegant solution. Hit the Connections link once more, and scroll down to the Firefox Add-on entry. Click the More Details link, then the Download And Install link. This will bring up a warning message in Firefox; go ahead and click Allow. Once the Install Now button becomes available, click it, then click the Restart Firefox button (don't worry, your session will be saved).

Now Option-click on the navigation bar at the top of the Firefox window and choose Customize. You'll be presented with a selection of icons; scroll down and you'll find two new Toodledo icons. Drag them to your navigation bar, and you'll have instant access to Toodledo: One button quickly adds new tasks, and the other brings up your to-do list in a sidebar.

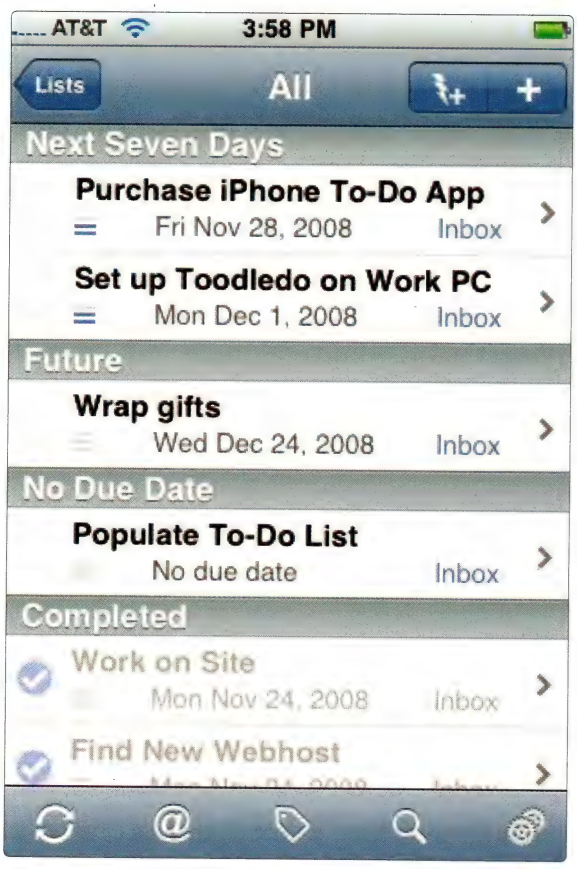
If you use Firefox, your to-dos can live in a handy sidebar.

To-Do List (cont.)

4 Phoning It In

And here we come to one of the main reasons we've chosen Toodledo as the core of our to-do empire: iPhone compatibility. No less than three different apps support synchronization with Toodledo as of this writing, with at least one more on the way. Currently, you have your pick of Toodledo's own Toodledo ($3.99), the more streamlined Ultimate Todos ($4.99), or the robust Todo ($9.99). And if you're not keen on the idea of paying a single red cent for all this accessibility, Toodledo also sports an iPhone-friendly Web app: Just tap www.toodledo.com/slim into Mobile Safari.

No iPhone? No problem! If your phone has Internet access at all, you should be able to at least view your list by visiting one of the following links: www.toodledo.com/html, www.toodledo.com/wap2.php, or www.toodledo.com/wap.php. (If you're not sure whether your phone supports simple HTML, WAP 2.0, or WAP 1.0, try the links in the order given.)

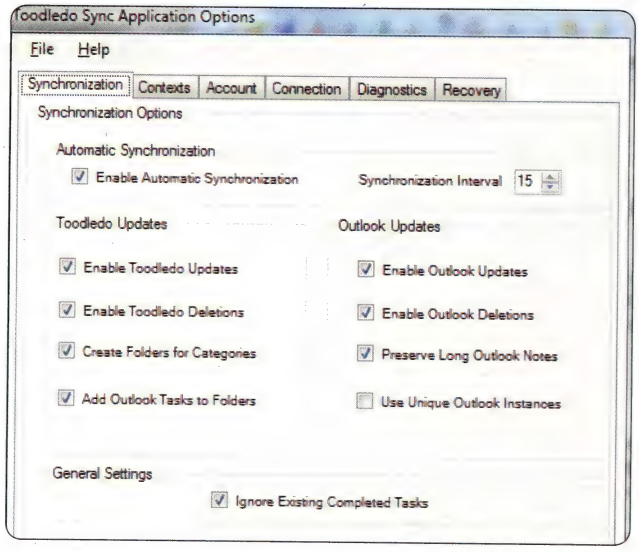


Several iPhone apps can keep your Toodledo list synced with your iPhone or iPod touch—this is Todo.

5 The Other Side of the Tracks

Don't worry, PC friends. We haven't forgotten about those of you whose jobs put you in front of Windows machines for eight hours a day. You can use browser access or the Firefox plug-in to access your Toodledo account, of course, but many of you have a slicker option. Thanks to the ubiquity of Microsoft Outlook in business environments, one enterprising developer has whipped up an application specifically to sync Toodledo to Outlook.

Head to www.chromadrake.com, where you'll find the donation-driven ToodledoSync. Installation is fairly straightforward, but note that the application doesn't start automatically after installation, so you'll want to fire it up manually from your Startup folder on your Start menu. The first time you run the software, you'll also need your Unique ID from Toodledo, which is different from your username. You can find it by clicking on Account Settings in Toodledo's sidebar; just copy it and paste into ToodledoSync.



If you need to get cross-platform, Toodledo lists can even sync with Microsoft Outlook.

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Overnight Matte Finish Screen Upgrade For MacBook Pro $199
Convert Your MacBook To A GPS Enabled Tablet With Pressure Sensitive Stylus!
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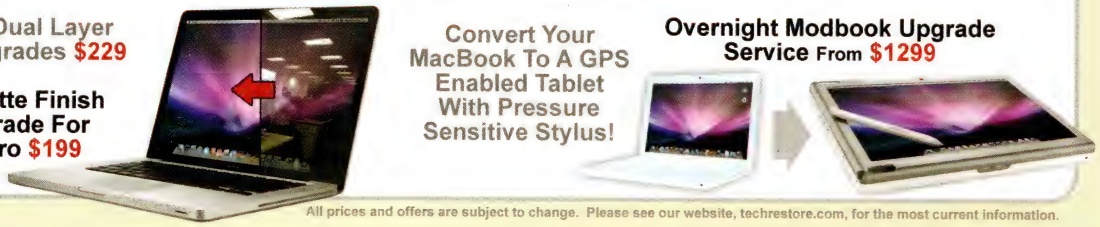

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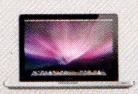

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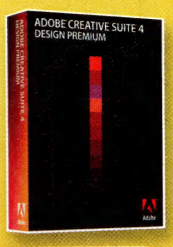

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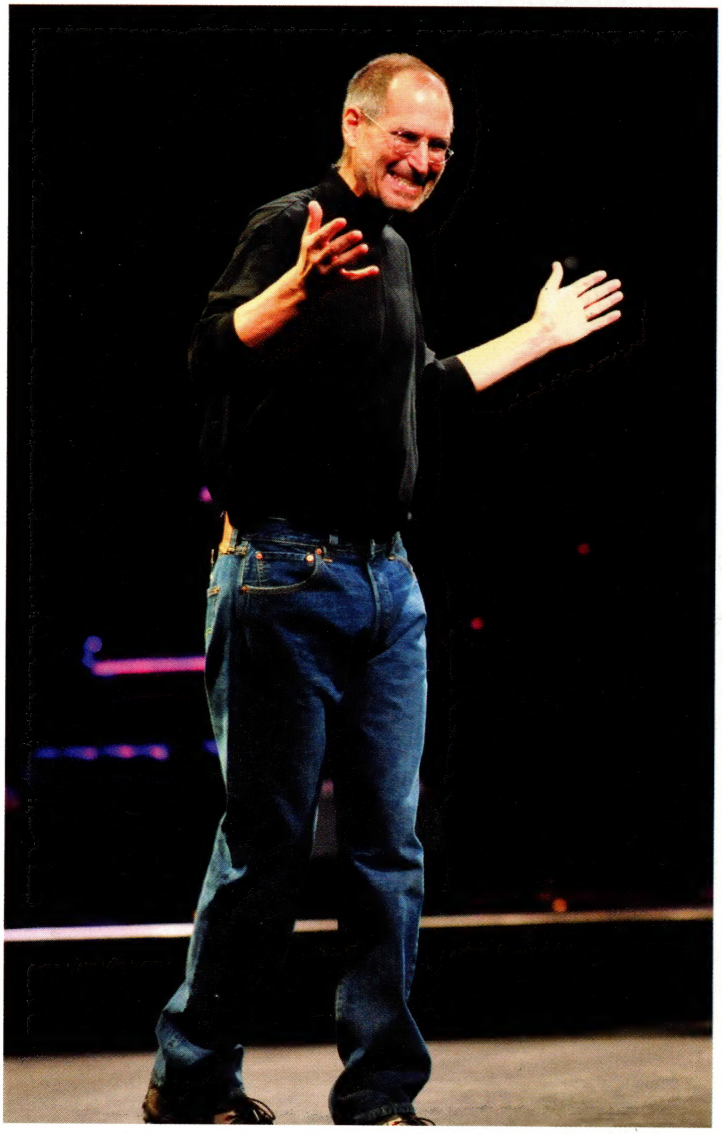
SAY WHAT!?

Back in December, we announced our own Mac-centric version of the *New Yorker*'s caption contest. We offered up an image of Steve Jobs, taken by *Mac|Life*'s own paparazzi at last year's keynote. Little did we know that would be Steve's last one. The entries poured in, but there were several common themes. Fish stories were a popular motif—as in "...it was this big." Parodies of Subway's ubiquitous "Five... five-dollar foot-long" came in several variations. And then there were the ones that aren't the sort of thing that we can print in a family-friendly publication... but they certainly made the rounds via office email.

In the end, it was Omar Correa from San Antonio who stood out in our pile of captions. We were hoping against hope that Copy & Paste for the iPhone would debut at Macworld in January, but alas, we're still waiting. And now we know we aren't the only ones.

> ***"...and that's when I said, 'Copy & Paste? Who uses Copy & Paste these days?'"***



OMAR'S PRIZE
Etymotics hf2 ($179.00, www.etymotic.com)

Living on the edge?
Enter this month's contest!

DANGER IS MY MIDDLE NAME CHALLENGE

Back up your stuff.

If you do anything on a computer, it should be your mantra. But even the most kick-ass backup system in the world won't help you if you lose power between saves. Which is where the prize for this month's contest comes in. To win, tell us in 50 words or less about your worst data catastrophe, and send us a picture of you making your saddest "the power went out and the Mac ate my year-end report" face. Let us see your inner Ellen Feiss. The most heart-wrenching tale—or maybe the most amusing photo—will win our bacon-saving prize this month.

Include your full name, email and mailing addresses, and phone number with your entry. Send your photos (5MB limit; JPGs only) and sad stories (50 words or less) in the body of an email to contest@maclife.com with the subject line "Danger Is My Middle Name Challenge." Deadline for entry: March 31, 2009. Contest results will appear in the Jun/09 issue.
FOR COMPLETE CONTEST DETAILS AND RULES VISIT: www.maclife.com/contest

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APC Back-UPS ES 750G ($99.99, www.apcc.com), a ten-outlet surge protector and UPS that'll keep the electrons flowing for about 15 minutes, just long enough to save all your hard work and shut everything down.

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To have you and your company exhibit such exceptional service is unbelievably refreshing. Thank you, thank you, thank you!!! I will be highly recommending your company to anyone I encounter. ***— P.S.***

Dear Richard and Team: This is what I call great customer support. I wish more companies would figure this out these days. Thank you so much. ***— D.C.***

You have provided me one of the best services I have ever encountered on any on-line/telephone shopping. ***— T.K.***

Richard, thank you. That was the fastest response I have ever received. Great product by the way. Appreciate the assistance. ***— M.W.***

This is absolutely the best customer service experience I have had in a long time. ***— L.L.***

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— Chris.Pirillo.com

"The quintessential accessory for all iPhone/iPod owners. If you don't already own one, you need to order yours today."
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"Now RichardSolo has released a much improved version of the Backup Battery that not only provides more power for your iPhone or iPod, but some excellent new features that trash the competition."
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